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Understanding School Effectiveness and
School Improvement in Cyprus:
A study of the perceptions of stakeholders

By

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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ABSTRACT

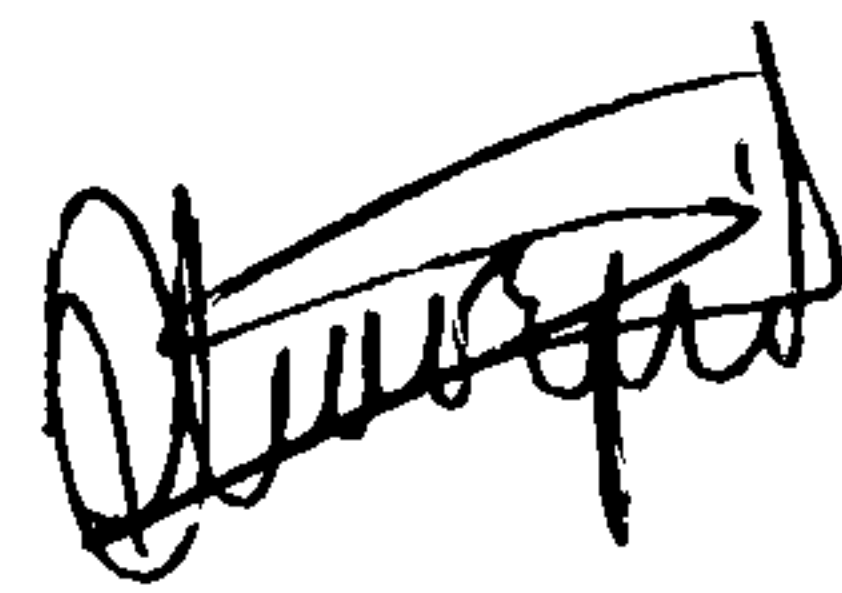
The modern and post-modern world has tried to explain the factors that lead to effective schooling. The school effectiveness (SE) movement investigates the characteristics of effective schools and how these characteristics may lead to improved pupil achievement. This study investigated the factors that contribute to effective schooling in Cypriot primary schools according to teachers, parents and pupils perspectives. In addition this research investigated people's attitudes towards the understanding of school effectiveness and school improvement. In the first part of the study 165 teachers, 166 parents and 188 pupils took part. The data was collected using questionnaires. In the second part of the study 5 teachers, 5 parents and 7 pupils were interviewed and an in depth investigation was made about the questionnaire findings and the factors that contribute to effective schooling. The study's findings explore implications for school improvement and development as well as for policy issues.

AUTHOR DECLARATION

The author has not been registered for any other academic award during the period of registration for this study.

The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any other academic award.

Christakis Georgiou Yiasemis



June 2005

CONTENT

		<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER 1	THE RESEARCH PROBLEM	
	1.1. Introduction	1
	1.2. School Effectiveness	1
	1.3. The reality in Cyprus	2
	1.4. The problem	3
CHAPTER 2	THE CYPRIOT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM	
	2.1 Introduction	4
	2.2 The Cyprus Educational System	5
	2.2.1. Pre-Primary Education	7
	2.2.2. Primary Education	7
	2.2.3. Secondary Education	8
	2.2.3.1. Stage one-Secondary General (Gymnasium)	8
	2.2.3.2. Stage two	8
	2.2.4. Higher Education	8
	2.2.5. Special Education	9
	2.3. Teachers' evaluation system	9
	2.4. Summarising	10
CHAPTER 3	SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS LITERATURE REVIEW	
	3.1. Introduction	11
	3.2. SE: Some of the most important research findings	11
	3.3. The factors that contribute to effective schools	17
	3.4. Mortimore et al. (1988) study	21
	3.5. Studies on the characteristics of effective schools in the last decade	23
	3.6. School effectiveness Models	34
	3.7. Teacher effectiveness studies	41
	3.8. School Improvement Research	44
	3.8.1. School Improvement Initiatives	47
	3.9. Linking SE and SI	50
	3.10. Summarising	53
CHAPTER 4	KEY ISSUES IN SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH	
	4.1. Introduction	54
	4.2. Key issues in School Effectiveness Research	54
	4.2.1. What do we mean by the term SE/Effective School?	54
	4.2.2. What methods is SE researcher using?	57
	4.2.3. How do we use any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools?	58
	4.3. Critique on School Effectiveness research	59
	4.3.1. The acknowledgement of a universal accepted definition of the term SE	61
	4.3.2 The methodology used in the various SE studies and the choice of outcomes (the value-added concept)	62
	4.3.3. The role of teachers in schools	64
	4.3.4. The role of curriculum in SE studies	65
	4.3.5. The role of SE research in government's educational policy	67
	4.3.6. The role of any list of the characteristics of effective	

	schools	69
	4.3.7. The role of SE research in ineffective schools	71
	4.4. Summarising	72
CHAPTER 5	AIM OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	
	5.1. Introduction	73
	5.2. Main Aim	74
	5.3. Research Questions	74
	5.4. Summarising	75
CHAPTER 6	METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH	
	6.1. Introduction	76
	6.2. Researching stakeholders' perceptions	76
	6.3. Focus on Primary Education	77
	6.4. Critique on SE and how they are treated in the study	78
	6.5. Methods of data collection	80
	6.5.1. The questionnaires	81
	6.5.2. The interviews	87
	6.6. Research schedule/data collection	91
	6.7. Piloting	92
	6.8. Statistical Analysis	93
	6.9. The sample	94
	6.9.1. The sample of the schools	94
	6.9.2. Teachers' sample	96
	6.9.3. Parents' sample	97
	6.9.4. Pupils' sample	100
	6.9.5. Head-teachers' and deputy-heads sample	103
	6.9.6. Inspectors' sample	104
	6.10. Summarising	105
CHAPTER 7	RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE	
	7.1. Introduction	106
	7.2. Question A.1: Which school could be described as effective?	106
	7.2.1. Teachers definitions of an "effective school"	109
	7.2.2. Teachers most common factors of an "effective school"	111
	7.2.3. Parents definitions of an "effective school"	111
	7.2.4. Parents most common factors of an "effective school"	114
	7.2.5. Pupils definitions of an "effective school"	115
	7.2.6. Pupils most common factors of an "effective school"	117
	7.3. Question A.2: How much important is each factor for SE?	118
	7.3.1. Factor Analysis	119
	7.4. The importance of each factor in the four levels	120
	7.4.1. Context Level-the two most important factors	120
	7.4.2. Context Level-the two factors with the lowest mean	124
	7.4.3. Context Level-Factor Analysis	125
	7.4.4. Context Level-Correlations	125
	7.4.5. School Level-the two most important factors	125
	7.4.6. School Level-the two factors with the lowest mean	130
	7.4.7. School Level-Factor Analysis	130
	7.4.8. School Level-Correlations	130
	7.4.9. Classroom Level-the two most important factors	130
	7.4.10. Classroom Level-the two factors with the lowest	

	mean	139
	7.4.11. Classroom Level-Factor Analysis	140
	7.4.12. Classroom Level-Correlations	142
	7.4.13. Pupils Level-the two most important factors	143
	7.4.14. Pupils Level-the two factors with the lowest mean	146
	7.4.15. Pupils Level-Factor Analysis	147
	7.4.16. Pupils Level-Correlations	148
	7.5. Question B.1.1: Do you have a development plan in your school?	149
	7.6. Question B.1.2: Do you need a development plan in your school?	151
	7.7. Question B.2: Do you believe that IN-SET programmes help teachers to improve and develop their school?	152
	7.8. Question B.3: “What I believe about my school”	153
	7.8.1. Factor Analysis-“What I believe about my school”	160
	7.9. Summarising	161
CHAPTER 8	RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS	
	8.1. Introduction	162
	8.2. Interview Questions	162
	8.3. Analyzing the interviews	163
	8.3.1. Context Level	165
	8.3.1.1. Context Level-the two most important factors	165
	8.3.1.2. Context Level-the two factors with the least importance	170
	8.3.1.3. Context Level-Conclusions	173
	8.3.2. School Level	173
	8.3.2.1. School Level-the two most important factors	174
	8.3.2.2. School Level-the two factors with the least importance	176
	8.3.2.3. School Level-Conclusions	179
	8.3.3. Classroom Level	179
	8.3.3.1. Classroom Level-the two most important factors	179
	8.3.3.2. Classroom Level- the two factors with the least importance	182
	8.3.3.3. Classroom Level-Conclusions	184
	8.3.4. Pupils Level	185
	8.3.4.1. Pupils Level-the two most important factors	185
	8.3.4.2. Pupils Level-the two factors with the least importance	187
	8.3.4.3. Pupils Level-Conclusions	189
	8.3.5. Which school could be described as effective according to your understanding?	190
	8.3.6. Do you have a development plan in your school?	191
	8.3.7. Do you need a development plan in your school?	191
	8.3.8. IN-SET programmes: their role in school improvement and development	191
	8.3.9. IN-SET programmes: their role in school effectiveness	191
	8.3.10. “What I believe about my school”	191
	8.4. Summarising	191

CHAPTER 9	DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS	195
	9.1. Introduction	195
	9.2. Research question 1: What are the key factors that contribute to effective schools in Cypriot Primary Education predicated on the opinions of (a) teachers, (b) headteachers and deputy heads, (c) parents, (d) inspectors-governors and (e) pupils?	196
	9.2.1. Context Level	196
	9.2.1.1. Factor “The quality of the textbooks”	196
	9.2.1.2. Factor “Parents’ support and assistant to their children’s progress”	198
	9.2.1.3. Factor “The building maintenance and the resources of the school”	201
	9.2.2. School Level	204
	9.2.2.1. Factor “A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils”	205
	9.2.2.2. Factor “A safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers”	206
	9.2.2.3. Factor “Leader and teacher cooperation”	207
	9.2.3. Classroom Level	209
	9.2.3.1. Factor “Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation...”	210
	9.2.3.2. Factor “The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which...”	211
	9.2.3.3. Factor “The class size”	212
	9.2.3.4. Factor “The teacher provides opportunities to contribute to pupils...”	214
	9.2.4. Pupils Level	216
	9.2.4.1. Factor “Pupils encouragement to reach their maximum potential”	216
	9.2.4.2. Factor “Pupils’ opportunity to learn”	217
	9.2.4.3. Factor “Pupils motivation by the teacher”	219
	9.3. Research Question 2: What is the meaning of the term SE/Effective School according to the opinions of each stakeholder?	219
	9.4. Research Question 3: Are there any key factors of effective schools more important than others and, if so, why?	221
	9.5. Research Question 4: How may knowledge about SE be turned into enhanced strategies for SI and development?	223
	9.6. Research Question 5: In what ways do teachers consider themselves as factors for SI and development?	227
	9.7. Research Question 6: In relation to 5, how can teachers improve and develop their school?	228
	9.8. Research Question 7: How can the stakeholders empower teachers to improve and develop their school?	231
	9.9. Summarising	233
CHAPTER 10	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	
	10.1. Introduction	235
	10.2. Size and nature of the sample	235
	10.3. Methods of analysis	235
	10.4. Uncontrolled variance	236

	10.5. Translation procedure	236
	10.6. Summarising	237
CHAPTER 11	ADDRESSING KEY POLICY ISSUES	
	11.1. Introduction	238
	11.2. Understanding SE	238
	11.3. Common Understanding	239
	11.4. Evolutionary Educational System	241
	11.5. Evaluating each Level's efficiency and effectiveness	242
	11.6. Setting aims for SI	243
	11.7. The role of IN-SET programmes	245
	11.8. Future Research on SE and SI	247
	11.9 Conclusions	250
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
REFERENCES		
APPENDIX		

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER 2	Table 1 The Cypriot Educational System
	6
CHAPTER 3	Figure 1. The twelve key factors of effective schools by Mortimore et al. (1988)
	22
	Figure 2. The three categories of effective school practices by Cotton (1995)
	26
	Figure 3. The eleven factors for effective schools by Sammons et al. (1995)
	28
	Figure 4. The ten characteristics of highly effective schools by the National Commission on Education (1996)
	30
	Figure 5. The ten characteristics of “intelligent school” by MacGilchrist, Myers and Reed (1997)
	33
	Figure 6. The Scheerens’ model (1990)
	36
	Figure 7. The Stringfield and Slavin model (1992)
	37
	Figure 8. The Creemers’ model (1994a)
	40
CHAPTER 5	Table 2. Which research questions each chapter of the study seeks to answer
	75
CHAPTER 6	Table 3 The sample of the research and the methods of data collection
	80
	Table 4 Research schedule and data collection
	91
	Table 5 The teaching experience of teachers’ sample
	97
	Table 6 The age of parents’ sample
	99
	Table 7 The Education of the sample
	99
	Table 8 Parents’ profession
	100
	Table 9 Parents’ profession
	102
CHAPTER 7	Table 10. Dispersion of all means according to Questionnaire.
	118
	Table 11. The Alpha values of each one of the four levels of the questionnaire
	119
	Table 12. Context Level. How important is each statement?
	121
	Table 13. School Level. How important is each statement?
	129
	Table 14. Classroom Level. How important is each statement?
	136
	Table 15. Pupils’ Level. How important is each statement?
	144
	Table 16. What I believe about my school
	154
	Table 17. Pupils: What I believe about my school
	159
CHAPTER 8	Table 18. Personal information of the interviewees
	163
CHAPTER 9	Figure 9. A Traditional Educational System
	224
	Figure 10. A Powerful Educational System Leading to Effectiveness
	225

CHAPTER 1. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1. Introduction

In all areas of their everyday life, people, search for effectiveness; in their jobs, the way they manage their finance, the way their children learn, the way their children study et cetera. Searching for effectiveness is a common characteristic of all systems and organizations. If one accepts this views it would be logical to assume that the educational system, as part of the government's system, must also continuously search for ways to be effective and, thus, develop and improve. At the same time all the levels of educational system (context, school, classroom, and pupil) must also search for effectiveness and for this reason all levels of education should have evaluation procedures.

Individual schools are the most important parts of an educational system. If this assumption is true then schools are also the most important element for effectiveness in an educational system for at least the following three reasons: (a) It is the link between the Ministry of Education and the teachers (classroom level), (b) It is the educational link between pupils and parents and (c) It is the place that learning is taking place. If a school is recognised as effective or ineffective this has immediate effects on pupils' learning and outcomes, on teachers' and parents' attitudes and morale about schooling, and on the relevant Ministry's decisions and actions.

1.2. School Effectiveness

The modern (1945-1980) and post-modern world (1980-...) tried to explain the ineffectiveness of many schools. For the past three decades, educational researchers have focused their research on recognising the characteristics of effective schools. Scholars such as Coleman et al. (1966), Jencks et al. (1972) found in their studies that the home background, including social class and economic status, had a far greater influence on children's development than

did the school they attended. Their findings were questioned because they reasoned that the differences between families were much greater than those between schools, and low socioeconomic families were unable to respond easily to the influence of school. In addition these studies were questioned about the quality of the data and the statistical analysis they used (e.g. intake differences between the schools, social interaction within school factor, for more discussion see Scheerens and Bosker, 1997). On the other hand, many researchers acknowledged that schools vary a great deal and the problem was how to distinguish the effects of families from the effects of the school pupils attend. These discussions and educational arguments were the start for the School Effectiveness (SE) movement, mainly in the USA and UK. Its objectives were to report the characteristics of effective schools because logically it was not efficient to spend so much effort and money on education while the results were so poor. This implied that the whole educational system was ineffective and changes for development and improvement were needed in order to raise the level of pupils in learning and achievement.

1.3. The reality in Cyprus

There are very few studies of effective schools in Cyprus (Kyriakides, 2000; Pashiardis and Pashiardis, 2000; Gagatsis and Kyrakides, 1999; Pashiardis, 1998) due to the fact that SE is not seen as an important influence on teaching and learning. The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus pays attention to factors of the learning procedure such as books, classroom and school climate, teachers' working conditions et cetera, neglecting factors such as teachers' effectiveness, pupils' outcomes and value added. In addition, there is no national assessment system (e.g. national standards and/or exams or national indicators) to give information about school or teacher effectiveness. The only information that can be

collected is by the subjective reports of the inspectors, information that is not available to the teachers, the headteachers, the parents, the pupils or the society in general.

1.4. The problem

In this study I will try to investigate the perspectives of teachers, heads and deputy-heads, inspectors, parents and pupils on the characteristics that an effective school in Cyprus should have. In other words I will try to identify the key factors that contribute to a school in order to be effective in Cypriot Primary Education, as reflected in the opinions of the teachers, the head and deputy head, the parents, the inspectors and the pupils of each sample school. In addition I will investigate people's attitudes towards the understanding of SE and School Improvement (SI) and the role of teachers in SI.

CHAPTER 2. THE CYPRIOT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

2.1. Introduction

The public educational system in Cyprus is highly centralised and conservative. Pre-primary, Primary, Secondary and some sections of Post-Secondary education are, according to Law 12/1965, under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The highest authority in educational policy-making is the Council of Ministers.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the administration of education, the enforcement of education laws and in the preparation of education bills. It prescribes syllabuses, curricula and textbooks. The government tables the bills to the House of Representatives for debate and approval.

The construction, maintenance and provision of equipment of school buildings are the responsibility of School Boards (like the LEA in the UK) under the supervision of the Technical Services of the Ministry of Education. The School Boards related to Education have no say in purely educational matters and their members receive no remuneration. Each year they submit their budget for the next school year to the Ministry of Education and Culture for approval. At the end of each school year, they submit a detailed financial statement to the Ministry of Education, which is audited by the State Auditors.

The Educational Service Commission (ESC), an independent five-member body, appointed for a six-year period by the President of the Republic, is responsible for the appointment, transfer, promotion and discipline of the teaching personnel. During the first steps of the independent Republic of Cyprus (1960) the role of the ESC was essential because of the bias that could exist in the teaching personnel. It was seen as the independent body that could appoint, transfer, promote and discipline teaching personnel with transparency and without discrimination. But nowadays, the responsibility of the ESC to appoint and transfer teaching personnel and actually to format any school's staff (head, deputy heads and

teachers) is a great shortcoming. It is impossible for the ESC to know the needs of each school and to appoint or transfer the appropriate teaching personnel. Only people who have everyday contact with the school as the head, deputy heads and the inspector could recognise the needs of each school.

The Ministry of Education is advised on its policies by the Educational Council, a widely representative body consisting of representatives of the Planning Bureau, the Director General of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, representatives of the Church of Cyprus, the parliamentary Committee of Education, Parents' Associations, Teachers' Associations, the University of Cyprus and seven well known persons for their keen interest in educational matters.

2.2. The Cyprus Educational System

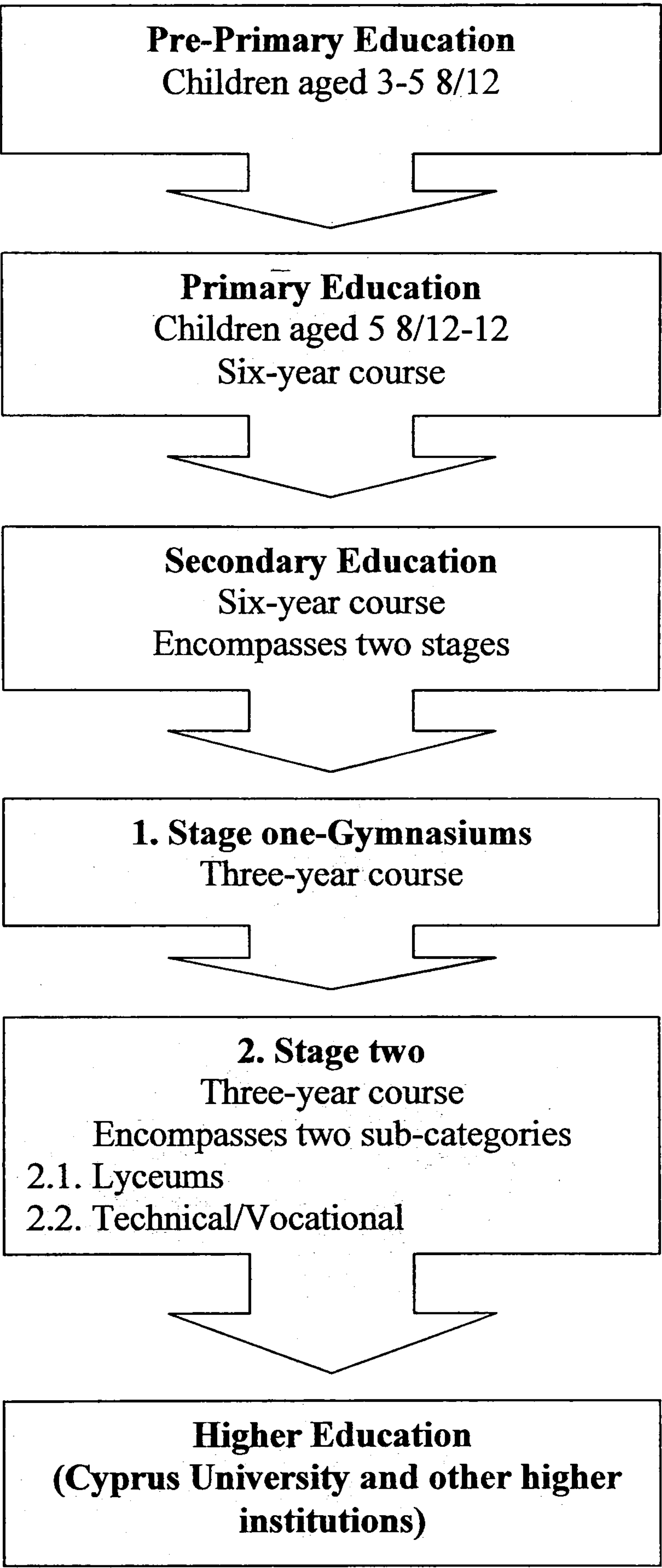
The education of children in Cyprus is provided through the following four levels (the fifth level refers to Special Education):

1. Pre-Primary Education.
2. Primary Education.
3. Secondary Education (Encompasses two stages: Stage one is offered in Gymnasiums-General and Stage two in the Lyceum and Technical/Vocational Schools).
4. Higher Education/Third Level (University of Cyprus and Colleges).
5. Special Education.

Public schools are mainly financed by public funds, while the private schools raise their funds primarily from tuition fees. At the second level of education, private schools receive a small state subsidy and in a few cases foreign aid through various religious or other organizations.

Table 1, shows the grid of the Cypriot Educational System.

Table 1. The Cypriot Educational System



2.2.1. Pre-Primary Education: It is offered in kindergartens for children aged 3 - 5 8/12 under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Only pre-primary education for children 4 6/12 - 5 8/12 is compulsory and is offered both in public and private kindergartens.

2.2.2. Primary Education: It is pursued mainly at public schools, but there are also a few private schools. Primary Education has been free and compulsory since 1962. The Government pays the salaries of the teachers and all expenses of the functioning of the School. The Government also undertakes the cost of the school buildings. The only tax levied is on immovable property in urban areas. Children begin their primary education at the age of 5 8/12 and leave when they have completed a six-year course.

According to the Ministry of Culture and Education (2001) the aim of the quantitative coverage for the Primary Education has already been achieved completely. So during the next five years, the focus will be on the qualitative upgrading of Primary Education with its renewal and updating, as well as its harmonisation with the other levels of education (Secondary Education). The increase of the educational and financial efficiency of thresholds will be promoted and structural requirements will be satisfied (For more information see <http://www.moec.gov.cy>):

The curriculum of Primary Education is based on a five-day, thirty-five period timetable. Each period lasts forty minutes. The timetable is the same in the whole country with few differences in rural areas (e.g. less teaching periods in some grades due to small school size) or in lower grades. The curriculum encompasses the following subjects even though in lower grades (year one to year four) some subjects have different duration: Greek Language, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Science, Geography, Design & Technology, History, Art, Religion, English Language, Free Activities.

2.2.3. Secondary Education: It is pursued mainly at public schools, but there are also a few private schools. Secondary Education encompasses two stages. Stage one is offered in Gymnasiums, and stage two in the Lyceum and Technical/Vocational Schools. Attendance is open to all schools without any examinations, and since 1985/86 attendance at the first stage has been compulsory.

2.2.3.1 Stage one-Secondary General (Gymnasiums): Schools in this category are the Gymnasiums, which comprise the first three grades, and the emphasis is on general subjects and humanities.

2.2.3.2. Stage two: It encompasses two sub-categories:

1. The Lyceums: Schools in this category comprise the last three grades, and the emphasis is on specific subjects, specialisation begins in the first grade. In the previous years pupils had to choose one of the five main fields of specialisation e.g. Economics, Science. As from the school year 2000/01, the Unified Lyceum was introduced and pupils have to choose subjects instead of fields.

2. The Technical/Vocational schools: In these schools pupils choose subjects and not fields of study. Schools in this category aim at providing local industry with technicians and craftsmen. These schools accept pupils at the last three grades, beginning in the first grade. Each school has two departments, the technical and the vocational. The technical lays emphasis on theory and practice in science and technical knowledge and skills, while the vocational department provides training for craftsmen and various service trades.

2.2.4. Higher Education: Education at this level is provided by the Cyprus University (admitted its first students in September 1992), other higher-level institutions like the Higher

Technical Institute, the Hotel College, the Forest College, the Nursing College and other Colleges (public and private) and non-formal institutions and centers.

2.2.5. Special Education: It provides education of primary, secondary school level and vocational training to children and persons with special needs of all ages. It includes schools for the blind, deaf and trainable persons.

2.3. Teachers' evaluation system

The inspector of each school evaluates teachers in four areas. Each area encompasses ten factors on which each teacher is evaluated. The four areas are the following:

1. Qualifications: qualifications and pedagogical education, scientific and pedagogical awareness, publications and other scientific work et cetera.
2. Working behaviour: teaching effectiveness, efficiency, working conscientiousness et cetera.
3. Management-Human relations: democratic behavior, effective communication, co-operation, instruction et cetera.
4. Behavior and Actions: behaviour, sociability, relations with parents, enforcement of laws et cetera.

Each area is evaluated with 1/10 to 10/10 (maximum total score 40/40). After evaluation by the inspector of the school the teacher can apply for promotion to deputy-head's or head's position. The Educational Service Commission (ESC) is responsible for the promotion of the teaching personnel. The ESC evaluates teachers in four areas, which are the following:

1. Value: The total score of marking that is the result of the fourfold average of the last two evaluations of the inspector of the school. It is obvious that only teachers with teaching experience more than 15 years can be promoted to the position of the deputy-head because the teachers have their first evaluation (with marks) in the 12th year of teaching service. This is

one of the most important shortcomings of the Cypriot Evaluation System (Pashiardis, 1995) because teachers can be promoted only after having a 15+ year teaching experience even though they may have additional qualifications such as MA in Educational Management or in other educational subjects.

2. Qualifications: A marking between 1-5 is given by the ESC for any additional qualifications (1-2 marks for any educational qualification, 3 marks for a BA or B.Ed, 4 marks for a MA degree and 5 marks for a Ph.D.).

3. Teaching Experience: For every month of teaching experience the teachers are valued with an additional mark of 1/12.

4. Interview: The teachers-candidates are interviewed by the ESC, which can add 1-5 marks to the total score of the candidate according to his/her performance in the interview.

The ESC adds all the marks that the teachers-candidates gain from the four areas.

The teachers with the highest marks get promoted.

2.4. Summarising

In this Chapter an examination of the Educational System of Cyprus and of Teachers' evaluation system has been done. In the next Chapter the literature on SE studies will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3. SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

I have arranged this chapter into the following sections: (a) Some of the most important findings on SE research, (b) The factors that contribute to effective schools, (c) The key study of Mortimore et al. (1988) on SE research, (d) Last decade's studies on the characteristics of effective schools and (e) School Effectiveness Models.

I must clarify that the use of the word “factor/s” in this study is synonymous with the word “characteristic/s” and “aspects”. This is necessary because some studies use the word “characteristics”, others the word “factors” or even the word “aspects” to describe the same things, in other words the factors that contribute to SE.

In addition, I focus my discussion mostly on the studies and research findings of the last two decades because the changes that occur within this specific time span (e.g. sociological, economic, educational) gave the society and especially education a different context within which it operates. Some issues have been found to be educationally important even though at the beginning these issues were neglected (e.g. the methodology used in the various SE studies and the choice of outcomes; the role of any list of the characteristics of effective schools). Moreover, it was not until the end of the 1980s that statisticians developed reasonably good methods for analysing hierarchical data derived from studies investigating the school effect (Goldstein, 1995). Studies pre-dating these methods therefore can offer only restricted contribution to theoretical and methodological development (Kyriakides, Campbell, and Gagatsis, 2000).

3.2. SE: some of the most important research findings

I reported that the findings of Coleman et al. (1966) and Jencks et al. (1972) were the start of the SE movement. These studies found that schools have little or no effect on student

achievement after the effects of family background variables have been taken into consideration. After these studies, a number of researchers questioned these findings and the methodology that was used. The researchers started to look for more reliable methods to investigate the outcomes of schooling.

During the last two decades a considerable body of research has accumulated which shows that although the ability and family background of students are major determinants of achievement levels, schools in similar social circumstances can achieve very different levels of educational progress (Sammons et al., 1995). Such studies were conducted in a variety of contexts, in different countries and on different age groups using a variety of data collection and analysis methods. Most SE studies were focused on academic achievement in terms of basic skills in reading, mathematics, science or examination results. Some studies have focused their research not only on educational achievements, but also on social outcomes such as attendance, attitude and behaviour (Rutter et al., 1979, Mortimore et al., 1988). Mortimore et al. (1988) have shown that in terms of pupils' progress (the value added) school effects are much more important than background factors such as age, gender, social class. The study showed that, after three years of junior education, the absolute achievement in basic skills of working class pupils in the most effective schools was higher than those of middle class pupils in the least effective schools.

Many studies search for differences between different groups of pupils (e.g. gender, ethnicity) or different schools' subject departments (e.g. English, Mathematics). Even though such studies use valid and reliable methods, many scholars acknowledge that they neglect the teaching and learning conditions within the school and classroom. The study by Smith and Tomlinson (1989) showed large differences in examination results for certain groups of pupils. Nuttall et al. (1989), Willms, and Raudenbush (1989) also supported this finding. This variation was as much as one quarter of the total variation in examination

results. Thomas et al. (1997) studied the differential SE. Their findings showed that different groups of pupils (gender, ethnicity, prior attainment and entitlement to free school meals) achieve different levels of progress. The study of Fitz-Gibbon et al. (1989) showed substantial variation between the effectiveness of different schools' subject departments of English and Mathematics. On the other hand, the study by Gray et al. (1990) reported that they found little evidence of any differential effectiveness of schools in a wide range of local education authorities.

According to the findings of the aforementioned studies it could be considered that schools achieve different levels of achievement for different groups of pupils (e.g. gender, ethnicity). This leads to the conclusion that SE is predicated on the quality of pupils and not of the quality of teaching, learning conditions within the school and classroom. This kind of research findings needs more investigation because other studies found that students' achievement and development in mathematics and language were significantly determined by clear instruction from the teacher and positive social interaction among students and between students and teacher (Birkemo, 1986).

Other studies search the achievements of pupils (outputs) by taking into account the background factors of pupils (inputs). These studies acknowledge that by investigating both inputs and outputs of pupils valid and reliable results can be recognised. Thomas (1995) measured SE in relation to the National Curriculum assessment results for 7-year olds. She found that a substantial percentage of school level variation in pupil outcomes can be explained by the pupil intake factors and that the rank ordering of some schools can change dramatically between the raw results and the value added measures. Meijnen and Sontag (1997) investigated the amount of influence of school and class in the careers of young children in primary schools. They reported that differences in pupil achievement between

classes already exist at the beginning of primary school and that these differences are, to a large extent, explained by the characteristics of the pupils' backgrounds.

Several studies examined the variation in pupils' outcomes between schools and classrooms. The researchers investigated which factors can explain pupils' differences at school and/or at classroom level. These studies used pupils' inputs and outputs data and also classroom observation, which strengthened their findings. Scheerens' and Creemers' (1989) study showed that the great variation between schools is in fact due to classroom variance and that the unique variance due to the influence of the school, and not the classroom, shrinks to very small levels. Reynolds and Cuttance (1992) agreed that only an 8%-15% of the variation in pupil outcomes was due to school and classroom differences. The above studies show controversial research findings; yet the identification by Levine and Lezotte (1990) that schools, which restricted themselves to a certain set of objectives and spent time on these objectives, did better than other schools is one answer why some schools and classrooms show better results. The issue of setting certain objectives in each school subject, that allows schools and especially classrooms to focus their efforts on specific objectives, is very important because as Creemers (1994a) argues, the classroom level is the most important of all other levels of schooling (context, school and student) because teaching and learning is taking place in the classrooms and teachers are the most important component in the instruction process. Therefore, we can conclude that one factor that is responsible for variation between schools and classroom is that schools and classrooms restrict themselves to a certain set of objectives and spent time on these objectives.

The headteacher's role was identified as one of the most important factors for SE (e.g. Edmonds, 1979; Rutter, 1980; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Mortimore et al., 1988). Cheng (1986) investigated how SE is related to the principal's leadership style and organizational climate and the importance of organizational factors in determining school performance. He

found that the organizational factors were very important in determining school performance. On the other hand, Brown (1987) studied the role of school-based management in students' achievements finding that school based management did not appear to produce higher-grade scores. Most of these studies found that the role of headteacher is essential in promoting effectiveness at school and classroom level on various elements such as pupils' achievements, school climate, parental involvement et cetera. This recognition shows that organizational factors are very important in determining SE and that a school must be effective both at school and at classroom level.

Many studies research the role of school climate into SE. The study of Coleman and LaRocque (1990) found that school ethos was more important to SE than was the level of spending. Muijs and Reynolds (2002, p.58) reported, "School climate will strongly influence classroom climate, and in order to be effective the two need to be complementary". Vasstrom (1985) also investigated the importance of school ethos. He found that the head-teacher's support and relationship with the staff had a great effect on school culture and climate. In addition, Phillips (1997) investigated the role of communitarian and academic climate on mathematics achievement and attendance during middle school, finding that in order to improve students' skills, the role of communal schooling and a model of SE that places academic learning at its center and uses should be reconsidered. These studies acknowledge that school's ethos is one of the most important factors that contribute to SE. The ethos directs people's actions (teachers, heads, parent et cetera) in school and classroom. A positive ethos leads to positive actions and higher educational levels. On the other hand, a negative ethos leads to mistrust and negative actions, which, are not focused in the teaching process.

Even though various studies explore the role of school resources on SE, Levacic and Vignoles (2000) believe that SE research has largely neglected school resources as explanatory factors for student attainment. Greenwald et al. (1996) researched whether school

resources and student achievement were related. They found out that those were systematically related and that these relations were large enough to be educationally important. Harris et al. (1995) explored the key features of effective departments and found out common characteristics in the work of the departments, which appear to revolve around the effective organization of teaching, such as a collegiate management style, good resource management et cetera. Jacques and Brorsen (2002) investigated the relationship between types of school district expenditures and student performance. They found that schools that spend more on instruction (teachers, teacher supplies, and teacher training) have higher test scores than those that spend less in those areas. Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (1996) in their study about the effect of school resources on student achievements found that school resources are systematically related to student achievements and that these relations are large enough to be educationally important. Hanushek (1996) in a study of school resources and student performance found that school expenditures are not related to student performance.

The research evidence is ambiguous about the role of school resources and expenditures showing different results, despite the strong belief among educators, teachers and parents that expenditure is causally and positively related to student outcomes (Hanushek, 1986, 1997; Burtless, 1996; Laine et al., 1996). When discussing the issue of resources and the way they support SE or not it is very important to know the way that the resources of the school are allocated and the ability of management in utilizing the available resources in the most efficient way, factors that many of the above studies neglect to investigate.

In this section I have discussed some of the most important findings on SE research. Research has been conducted in many aspects of schoolwork. On the other hand, it is also recognised that many other studies must be conducted to cover all areas of schooling. Some research findings are controversial or ambiguous and more studies are needed using valid and reliable methods. The fact is that in the last decade there has been more literature

review of the existing SE studies than empirical SE research. This issue will also be discussed in subsequent chapters because it is one of the most important shortcomings of SE research in recent time. In the next section, the characteristics of effective schools will be reported as many researchers in various studies mainly in the UK and the USA identified them.

3.3. The factors that contribute to effective schools

In the previous section, some of the most important findings of SE research during the past two decades were reported. An important part of SE research was the identification of certain characteristics in schools that showed more effectiveness than did other schools with similar status. In other words, the studies produced a list of all those characteristics that seemed to describe those schools that could be recognised as “effective” due to their outstanding work in comparison to other schools with similar status. The SE studies used various methods, different samples and investigated different countries or different areas of the same country (e.g. Edmonds, 1979; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Mortimore et al., 1988).

My aim in this section is to present a review of the key factors that contribute to SE as those were identified by the relevant international literature. One may acknowledge that many of those factors have common features even though they were identified in different periods of time, using different methods in various parts of the world or even in different areas of the same country. This recognition adds to the validity of the SE research. The conditions under which any educational research is applied are different for many reasons, such as the context, the time, the methodology and the methods used, the culture of those doing the research, the culture of those taking part in the research et cetera.

The first attempt to prove that schools do make a difference was performed by Edmonds (1979). In his study of effective schools he identified the following five

characteristics that seemed to describe effective schools, paying particular attention to factors that relate to classroom policy and to the instructional role of the head and teachers:

- ▶ The principal's leadership and attention to the quality of instruction.
- ▶ A pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus.
- ▶ An orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning.
- ▶ Teacher behaviours that convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery.
- ▶ The use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation.

Edmonds seemed to undervalue the importance of a school's policy and environment and their relevance to schoolwork, although his research considered poor urban schools. Teaching encompasses various roles such as instructor, communicator, allocator et cetera. The most important of these roles is the instructional one. It is important to note that today's world is multidimensional and demands multiple roles and choices; therefore all of the above must be taken into account in every aspect of school life. Rutter (1980) used a similar approach giving attention to factors that relate to classroom policy and to the role of teachers. He identified eight factors within schools determining high levels of effectiveness:

- ▶ The balance of intellectually able and less able children in the school.
- ▶ The system of rewards and punishments.
- ▶ The school environment.
- ▶ Children's participation in taking responsibility for their school lives.
- ▶ The use of homework and set of clear goals.
- ▶ Good time-keeping and willingness to deal with pupil problems.
- ▶ The importance of preparing lessons in advance and keeping the attention of the whole class.

► A combination of firm leadership together with a decision-making process in which all teachers felt that their views were represented.

Rutter gave more attention to factors that relate to classroom policy and to the role of teachers, especially in the ways that teachers act in the classroom. This research finding is important knowing that the researcher gave attention to schools' academic effectiveness, neglecting the effectiveness of the school in different areas. Brookover et al. (1979) searched for specific features of the school's social structure. The enquiry considered such characteristics as school size, attendance rates, teachers' qualifications and training and others. In addition it looked at the school's operational aspects, and perceptions of these by students and teachers. The researchers identified seven factors that lead to effective schooling:

- An orderly school climate.
- The high expectations of teachers for their pupils.
- A policy by the school that is achievements-oriented.
- A cooperative atmosphere.
- The school time is focused on task.
- Reinforcement.
- Streaming.

Brookover et al. focused their study on factors that are correlated to school's operational aspects as well as to the school's social structure. Renihan and Renihan (1984) conducted an analysis of some American studies and produced the following list of factors that were recognised as important in creating an effective school:

- Leadership qualities (instructional leadership, personal vision et cetera.).
- Conscious attention to climate (a climate which is conducive to learning).
- Academic focus (emphasis on basic academic skills).
- Great Expectations for pupil performance.

- ▶ Sense of mission shared by leaders, teachers and pupils.
- ▶ Positive motivational strategies.
- ▶ Feedback on academic performance.

The above list gives emphasis on the relationships between the characteristics of classrooms and the outcomes of schooling. It is something that was also recognised in the studies that were previously reported (Edmonds, 1979, Rutter, 1980).

The studies of Edmonds (1979), Rutter (1980) and Renihan and Renihan (1984) neglect the role of schools' norms and the involvement of school's context in SE. On the other hand Brookover et al. (1979) focused their study on factors that are correlated to school's operational aspects as well as school's social structure. It is worth considering whether the factors that relate to classroom norms and to the instructional role of the headteacher and teachers are neutral to factors such as schools' norms and context or if their interrelation is so strong that many times the school's policy and environment are the causes for the classroom policy and the instructional role of the headteacher and teachers. The classroom norms and the instructional role of the headteacher and teachers are not common and well understood by all the stakeholders and especially by the headteacher and teachers if involvement of the school policy and context does not exist. To support my argument I will report the work of Coleman and LaRocque (1990) who studied ten school districts. They found that the emphasis for SE studies shifted from the classroom and individual school to the school district level. Their findings were that school ethos and the role of the community and, more specifically, the importance of parent integration in the programs of effective school districts were very important to school effectiveness.

The limitations of the above studies (especially in Edmonds' study) were recognised by other studies, which added additional factors or made the original Edmonds' factors more explicit and more operational. E.g. Purkey and Smith (1983) added the need for

staff stability, maximized learning time and district support, which they identified as organizational characteristics and order and discipline, which they identified as process characteristics.

3.4. Mortimore et al. (1988) study

The study of Mortimore et al. (1988) showed that schools could be effective in relation to their pupils' academic and social outcomes in different ways. Their study was able to systematically collect data on a wide range of school processes, over a period of four years, of 2000 pupils in fifty randomly selected primary schools, effective and ineffective, in the London area using multiple level forms of analyses. The study investigated if some schools were more effective than others were in promoting pupils' learning and development, once account had been taken of variations in the characteristics of pupils in the intakes to schools. They also investigated the progress of 2000 pupils over a period of four years of schooling, the differential effectiveness related to race, sex and social background of pupils. They collected data of pupil intakes to school and classes, of pupils' educational outcomes and of classroom and school environment. A variety of different statistical techniques were used in analysing the data. In addition to analyses of the school and class effects, the attainment, progress and non-cognitive development of children were examined for all individuals and, separately, for different groups. Figure 1, shows the twelve key factors of effective schools by Mortimore et al. (1988).

Figure 1. The twelve key factors of effective schools by Mortimore et al. (1988)

	- Purposeful leadership of the staff by the headteacher
School	- The involvement of the deputy head
Policy	- The involvement of teachers
	- Consistency amongst teachers
	- Structured sessions
Classroom	- Intellectually challenging teaching
Policy	- The work-centred environment
	- Limited focus within sessions
	- Maximum communication between teachers and pupils
School and	- Record keeping
Class Policy	- Parental involvement
	- Positive climate

(Mortimore et al., 1988, p.250)

The results of the study were to identify a number of schools, which were effective in both academic and social areas, and possessed the following twelve key characteristics-factors (see Figure 1). They grouped the characteristics into factors that concern school policy, classroom policy and aspects of relevance to school and class policy. Their list was considered as one of the most complete. The most important result of the study was the recognition that a school in order to be effective must be effective both at school and at classroom level. This research finding is very important because previous studies gave emphasis primarily to either classroom or school level (Edmonds, 1979, Rutter, 1980, Purkey and Smith, 1983, Reniham and Reniham, 1984). Also the study of Scheerens and Creemers (1989) showed that the great variation between schools is in fact due to classroom variance and that the unique variance due to the influence of the school, and not the classroom, shrinks to very small levels.

The need for cooperation, mutual understanding, common vision and goals between the school and the classroom policy is fundamental in promoting school effectiveness. No school can be effective, at the stage that it could be, without cooperation of all levels of education (context, school, classroom and pupils).

Finally, an extremely important result of the study is the recognition by the researchers that this list of characteristics is not a blueprint for effective schooling but a framework for effective operation.

3.5. Studies on the characteristics of effective schools in the last decade

Levine and Lezotte (1990) researched the unusually effective schools, identifying eleven characteristics that describe them:

1. Productive school climate and culture.
2. Focus on student acquisition of knowledge.
3. Appropriate monitoring of student progress.

4. Practice-oriented staff development at the school site.
5. Outstanding leadership.
6. Salient parent involvement.
7. Effective instructional arrangements and implementation.
8. High operationalized expectations and requirements for students.
9. Student sense of efficacy.
10. Multicultural instruction and sensitivity.
11. Rigorous and equitable student promotions policies.

These characteristics were the result of the discussion of key correlates of effective schools. The researchers referred in their study to those aspects of organizational functioning in which unusually effective schools rank higher than ineffective schools. The researchers used a distinction between unusually effective and ineffective schools, in which “like is compared with like”, for instance the five best performing schools were compared to the five least successful schools. Using this method the authors identified that a particular correlate in itself can have a low or insignificant association with educational outcomes, but in conjunction with other correlates may operate as an effectiveness-enhancing composite. These characteristics are those that referred to school and classroom level as in the study of Mortimore et al. (1988).

Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) in the Louisiana School Effectiveness Study used the socio-economic status (SES) as a context variable in investigating the characteristic of the effective and ineffective schools. The researchers divided seventy-six primary schools into two dimensions according to their status: a) Effectiveness, b) Socio-economic status (SES). The first dimension encompassed three sub-categories; effective, typical effective and ineffective schools and the second dimension encompassed two sub-categories; middle and low SES. The total type of schools compared was six. The contrasts between the six types of

schools showed differences among various areas of schooling. Regardless of the SES there were differences between the effective and ineffective schools that had to do with: (a) The frequent monitoring of student progress, (b) The orderly environment, (c) The clear academic mission and focus and (d) The high academic engaged time on task.

Even though similarities were found between effective middle SES and effective low SES schools, the following six differences were identified in specific areas:

1. Promotion of educational expectations.
2. Principal leadership style.
3. The use of external reward structures.
4. Emphasis on school curriculum.
5. Parental contact with the school.
6. Experience level of teachers.

Although the researchers did not produce a complete list of factors that promote SE, their findings are very important because they report similar factors to Levine and Lezotte's findings. They found that regardless of the SES there are differences between effective and ineffective schools, which show that the actions taken at the school level and the process of the organization are major determinants of schools' progress.

Cotton (1995) used the empirical findings of many studies and then described them in terms of precise recommendations for school practice. Using this approach she produced a framework summarising the funding of effective school practices in three categories: the classroom, the school and the district. The list covers the three areas of schooling: district, school, and classroom. The Mortimore et al., and Levine and Lezotte studies recognised the importance of only two areas of schooling (school and classroom). Cotton's distinction shows that the researcher acknowledges the correlation between the three areas of schooling. Figure 2, shows Cotton's (1995) categories of effective school practices.

Figure 2. The three categories of effective school practices by Cotton (1995)

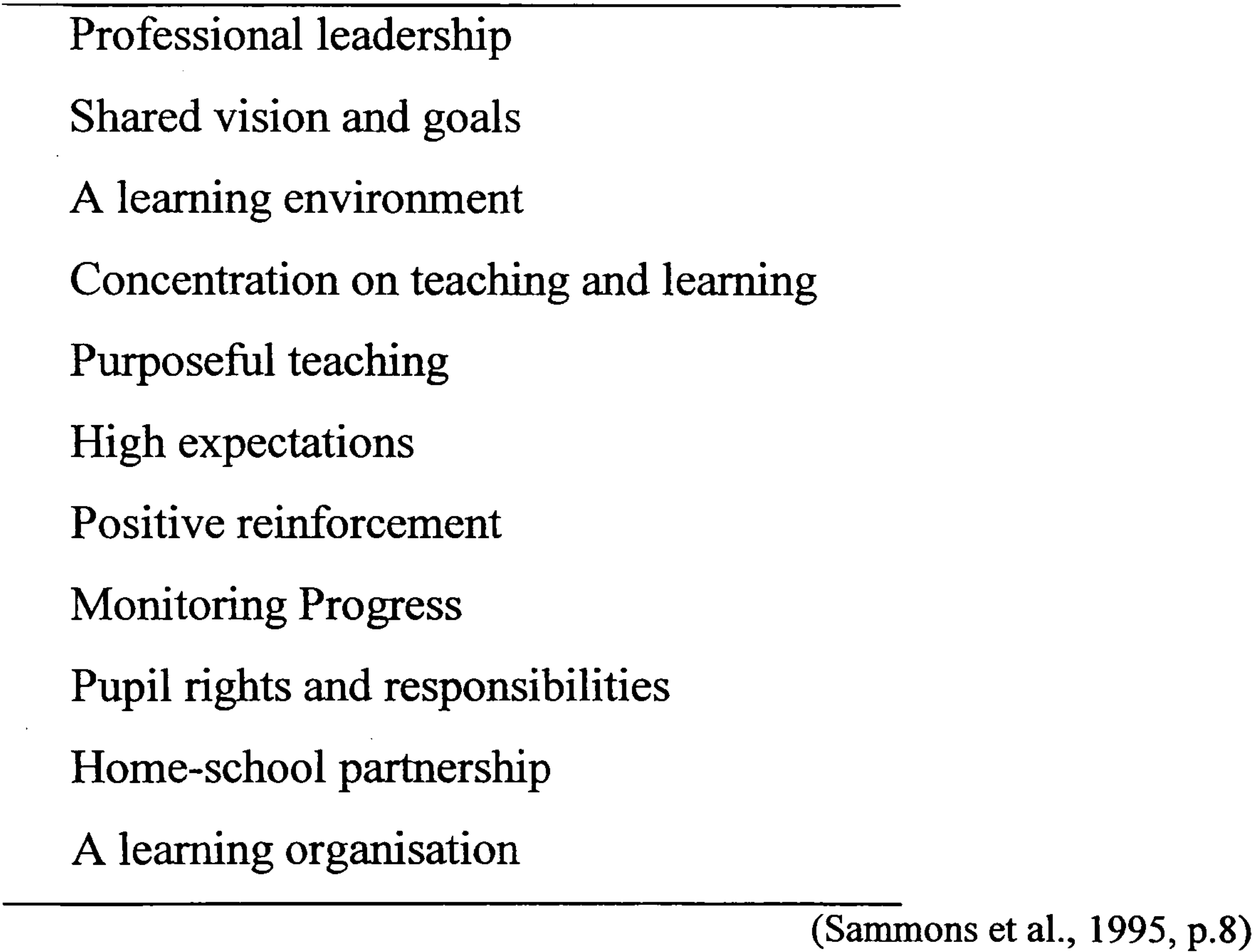
Classroom	- planning and learning goals
	- classroom management and organization
	- instruction
	- teacher-student interactions
	- equity
	- assessment
School	- planning and learning goals
	- school management and organization
	- leadership and school improvement
	- administrator-teacher-student interactions
	- equity
	- assessment
District	- special programmes
	- parent and community involvement
	- leadership and planning
	- district-school interactions
	- curriculum
	- assessment

(Cotton, 1995, pp.7-9)

An important aspect of Cotton's list is the report of the factor "Curriculum" in the District level. SE studies have been criticised because they do not report anything on the curriculum and the way that the context, aims, goals and methods described in a curriculum can influence positively or negatively, school effects, pupils' progress and SE (in the next chapter I will discuss this issue). Cotton's list reports all those factors which have a role to play in SE. But which direction must one follow in order to effectively apply the factors contributing to SE? One may argue that this recognition limits the strengths of this list. For example the characteristic "Assessment" is reported in the three areas of schooling. At the classroom level we have the assessment of students; at the school level the assessment of teachers and; at the district level the assessment of schools. This raises the issue of which method should be used in assessing and what should be assessed? How often should be assessed? Why is assessment so important in SE? How should we use the results of assessment in school improvement? All these questions, and many more, must be answered and specific directions should be given that will add to effective schooling. Having a clear, analytic and descriptive list such as that of Cotton, and knowing the conditions that exist in a school, one can organise a development plan for SE. The most important issue when searching and planning for SE is to respect the local conditions where a school exists.

Sammons et al. (1995) produced their list by reviewing the results of quantitative and qualitative SE studies such as Mortimore et al. (1988), Levine and Lezotte (1990), Scheerens (1992). The factors are very general and they encompass many other factors. For example the characteristic "A learning organization". According to Holly and Southworth (1993) a learning organization must have such characteristics as: the focus is on children, the individual teachers to be continuing learners, the staff to learn from each other, the school must be a learning system, the headteacher is the leading learner et cetera. Figure 3, shows the eleven factors for effective schools by Sammons et al. (1995).

Figure 3. The eleven factors for effective schools by Sammons et al. (1995)



One, in order to understand the list must have the necessary knowledge and understanding of the meaning of specific issues such as professional leadership, purposeful teaching, learning organization et cetera. A shortcoming of the list is that the factors are not categorised to school, classroom, district or any other category so that the researchers could easily understand each factor and the way it operates. Looking at the list of Mortimore et al. (1988), Levine and Lezotte (1990) and Cotton (1995) one can see that they encompass characteristics that give specific directions for effective schooling. Although the factors of Levine's and Lezotte's (1990) list is not categorised, one can see that the factors are clear and describe specific directions for effective schooling.

Figure 4, shows ten characteristics that were demonstrated to a high level in highly effective schools. Those were identified by a study of the National Commission on Education (1996) in eleven case studies in UK. Although the factors of the list are not classified or grouped according to the area in which they operate, the list covers the two areas of schooling (school and classroom). The list covers the area of all those actions within the school that can play an important role in SE giving attention both to organizational, cultural and contextual factors. Figure 4, shows the ten characteristics of highly effective schools by the National Commission on Education (1996).

Figure 4. The ten characteristics of highly effective schools by the National Commission on Education (1996)

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1. Strong, positive leadership by the head and senior staff
 2. A good atmosphere or spirit, generated both by shared aims and values and by a physical environment that is as attractive and stimulating as possible
 3. High and consistent focus on teaching and learning
 4. A clear and consistent focus on teaching and learning
 5. Well-developed procedures for assessing how pupils are progressing
 6. Responsibility for learning shared by pupils themselves
 7. Participation by pupils in the life of the school
 8. Rewards and incentives to encourage pupils to succeed
 9. Parental involvement in children's education and in supporting the aims of the school
 10. Extra-curricular activities that broaden pupils' interest and experiences, and expand their opportunities to succeed, and help to build good relationships within the school
-

(National Commission on Education, 1996, p.366)

The characteristics of effective schools that were identified by Levine and Lezotte (1990) were the result of the correlation of unusually effective schools versus ineffective schools. Mortimore et al. (1988) used a similar approach. On the other hand, the characteristics that were identified by Cotton (1995), the National Commission on Education (1996) and Sammons et al. (1995) used a different approach. The list of the National Commission on Education (1996) and Cotton (1995) was based on empirical findings and Sammons et al. (1995) was based on the concept of value added. In other words, Sammons et al. (1995) paid more attention to methodological issues, the size of school effects, and on differential effectiveness.

It is worth considering whether the approach that Levine and Lezotte (1990) and Mortimore et al. (1988) used in their study or that of the National Commission on Education (1996), Cotton (1995) and Sammons et al. (1995) was more valid. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, as any other research method. But the important point here is that all studies identified certain factors for effective schools that seem to work. Looking at the lists of the above five studies we can see some common or similar characteristics. For example Mortimore et al. (1988) recognised the characteristics "The work-centred environment", "Parental involvement" which come close to "Focus on central learning skills" and "Salient parent involvement" (Levine and Lezotte, 1990), "Concentration on teaching and learning" and "Home-school partnership" (Sammons et al., 1995), "School-wide emphasis on learning" and "Parent community involvement" (Cotton, 1995), "A clear and consistent focus on teaching and learning" and "Parental involvement in children's education and in supporting the aims of the school" (National Commission on Education, 1996). What is particularly interesting about this is that while different approaches were used in different periods of time and in different contexts the five studies identified similar factors of effective schools.

Stoll and Fink (1992) based on the list of characteristics that was produced by Mortimore et al. (1988), planned a study of effective schools in Ontario, Canada and how they could improve these characteristics within the schools. Stoll and Fink considered Mortimore's characteristics as the most appropriate for their research in Canada. On the other hand, Holdway and Johnson (1993) in their research at elementary and junior schools of Alberta, found eight characteristics of effective elementary schools. Looking at their characteristics and those of Mortimore et al. (1988) we can see that Holdway and Johnson (1993) give attention to the factor "student". They explained every characteristic in correlation with students and the impact on them. These different findings support the fact that different characteristics are recognised as key factors of effective schools in different countries. The question here is how it is possible to have different characteristics of effective schools in countries or areas with the same or similar structures. The answer is based on the assumption that every educational system has specific aims and goals based on the history, culture, and expectations of the society. These aims cannot be applied with the same level of effectiveness in all schools because even if one supposes that human resources (staff, headteacher) have the same abilities, skills and effectiveness, in a theoretical aspect, the environment (pupils, parents, equipment, buildings, physical environment, culture et cetera) will not be the same. This will lead to different factors of effective schooling even though the same characteristics can be identified.

MacGilchrist, Myers and Reed (1997) investigated the findings of research on school and classroom effectiveness and improvement. They found characteristics that describe effective schools. They called those schools "intelligent schools" and the characteristics as intelligence. Figure 5, shows the characteristics of MacGilchrist, Myers and Reed (1997).

**Figure 5. The characteristics of “intelligent schools” by
MacGilchrist, Myers and Reed (1997)**

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1. Contextual intelligence (capacity to see school in a wide world et cetera)
 2. Strategic intelligence (capacity to utilize the findings from research et cetera)
 3. Academic intelligence (promoting academic effectiveness)
 4. Reflective intelligence (capacity to interpret and use information, data et cetera)
 5. Pedagogical intelligence (school’s ability to become a learning organisation)
 6. Collegial intelligence (staff and stakeholders ability to cooperate)
 7. Emotional intelligence (ability to manage emotions, handling relationships et cetera)
 8. Spiritual intelligence (feeling that everybody is important and has something to contribute)
 9. Ethical intelligence (ability to convey school’s purpose and principles)
-

(MacGilchrist, Myers and Reed, 1997, pp.107-109)

The above list uses a different method to the previous studies. The researchers use the word "intelligence" to describe areas in which a school must be effective. Each area encompasses specific characteristics that must exist in an effective school. It covers not only organisational or cultural factors but also many other areas of the school life such as contextual, emotional, academic and others. It covers the areas that a school should investigate to determine the level of its effectiveness. A shortcoming of the list is that the areas of schooling are not clustered into levels (e.g. school, classroom level) so that it will be easily understood and applied to the school. In addition the list neglects the context level and refers only to factors that are within a school's ability to interpret.

3.6. School Effectiveness Models

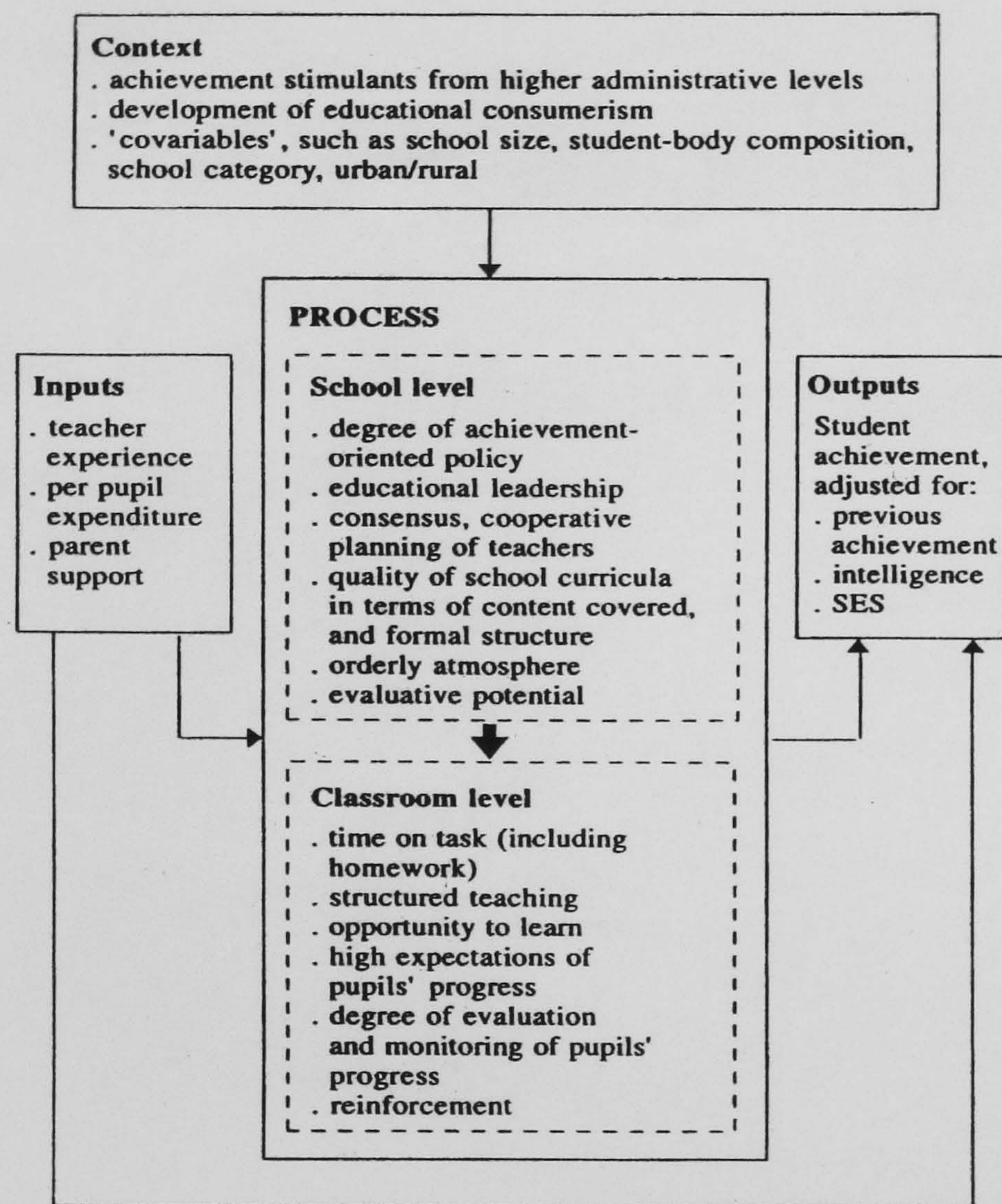
Researchers attempted to integrate and apply the factors of the effective schools and the SE research findings into models of SE. These models could actually be applied covering not only the school level, but also the whole educational system. Three models will be discussed.

Scheerens' model (1990) is based on a review of the international literature on SE research and on the instructional effectiveness referring to those factors that had to do with the teaching process. Figure 6, shows that the model starts from the context of the educational system. Its directions through the process of the school and the classroom level determine the Outputs of pupils. At the same time the Inputs (e.g. teacher experience, parent support) influence the Process of the School and Classroom level which has an impact on the Outputs of the pupils. According to Scheerens (1997, p.46) "the general assumption is that higher level conditions somehow facilitate lower level conditions" of the model. He refers to six ways in which the higher levels can facilitate the lower level variables (for more details see Scheerens, 1997, pp.58-60):

1. Relations between conditions at higher and lower levels can take the shape of contextual effects in which the aggregates of certain attributes defined at micro level are seen as having an additional causal influence.
2. Conditions at higher levels can act as mirrors to conditions at lower levels.
3. Higher levels can be thought of as overt measures creating effectiveness-enhancing conditions at lower levels.
4. Conditions at higher levels can serve as incentives to promote efficiency-enhancing conditions at lower levels.
5. Conditions at higher levels can serve as material facilities for conditions at lower levels.
6. Higher level conditions may serve as buffers to protect efficiency-enhancing conditions at lower levels.

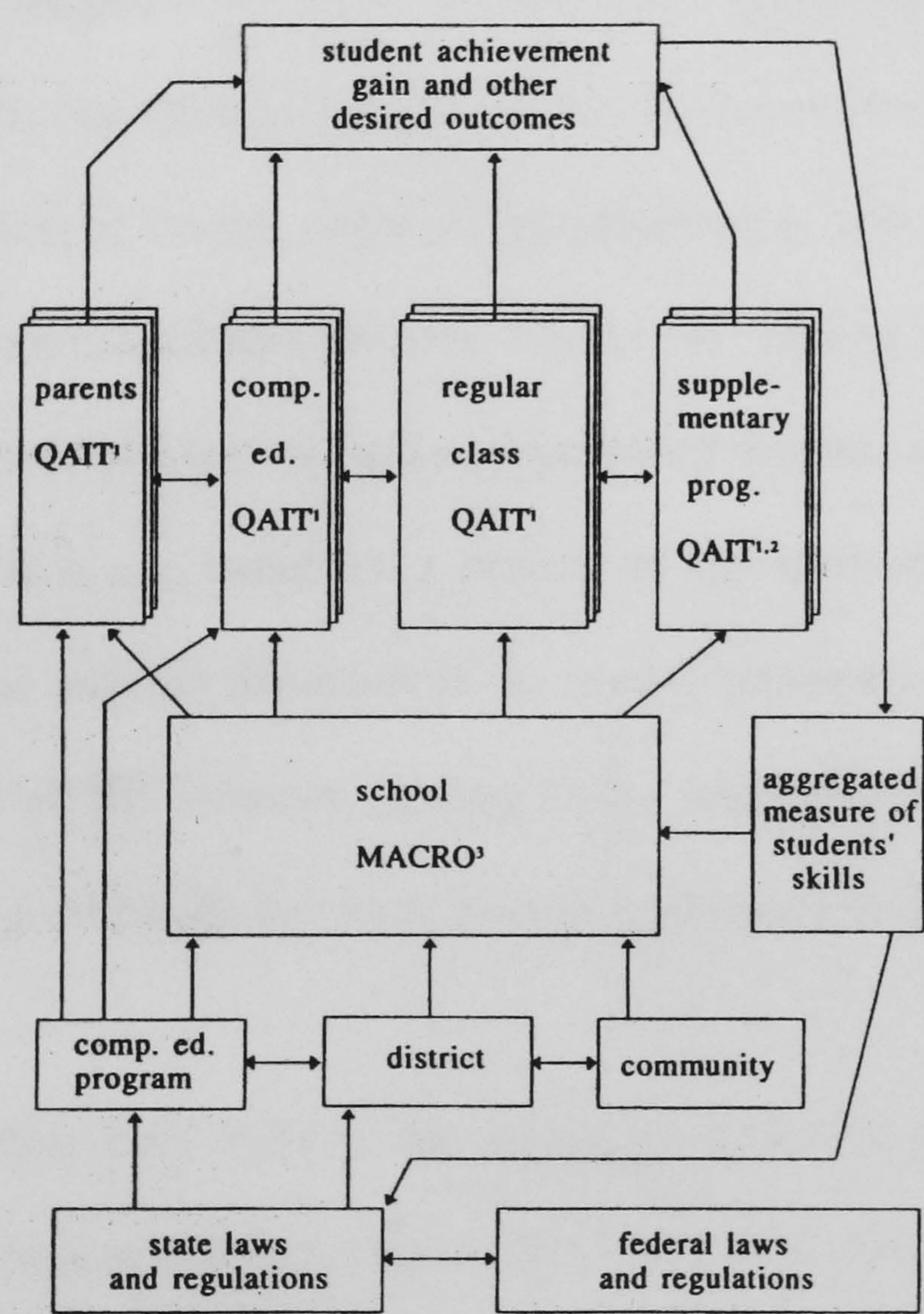
Scheerens (1990) emphasises the role of School level, which influences the classroom level. The influence is one way between the two levels and between Inputs and Outputs without interaction between the Context and Process, but rather a relation based on directions and guidelines of the upper level to the lower. This is also applied to the relation between the School-Classroom level and the Inputs-Outputs. It is acknowledged that the higher levels of any system direct and guide the lower levels of the system. Therefore the higher levels are considered as frameworks for the whole system. The model will be complete and more efficient if there is a two-way communication between the higher and lower levels of the system because the lower levels are the places that learning (e.g. in an educational system) is actually taking place and problematic areas will be acknowledged; messages for improvement and changes will be sent to the higher level of the system. Figure 6, shows Scheerens' Model (1990).

Figure 6. The Scheerens' Model (1990)



The second model is Stringfield and Slavin (1992), which is based on the interaction of four levels of schooling. According to the researchers four levels interact and influence school outcomes: the student, the classroom, the school and the district, community levels (for more details see Stringfield and Slavin, 1992, pp.35-69). Two interesting features can be recognised in the model: (a) even though the four levels of the model have a one-way communication, the various elements of each level interact and influence each other in a two-way communication, (b) the higher level of the system (district and community level) gets feedback from the lower levels in a way that change and improvement is possible and applicable to the lower levels of the system where teaching is taking place. Figure 7, shows the Stringfield and Slavin Model (1992).

Figure 7. The Stringfield and Slavin Model (1992)



A hierarchical elementary education effects model. ¹QAIT: quality, appropriateness, incentive, time of instruction; ²special education, bilingual education, etc. ³MACRO: meaningful goals, attention to academic functions, coordination, recruitment and training, organization. (Source: Stringfield & Slavin, 1992.)

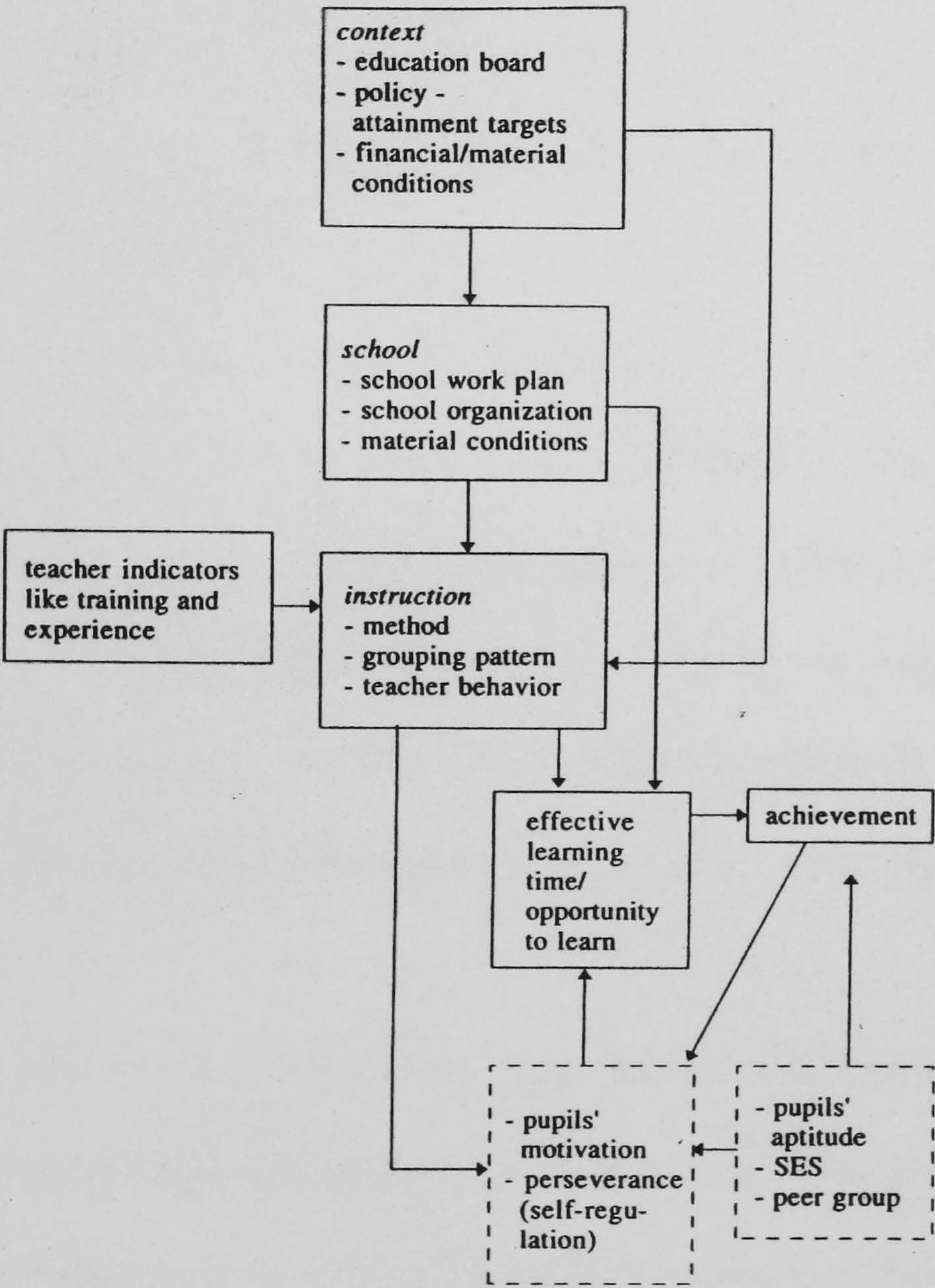
Creemers' Model (1994a) is based on the interaction of four levels of schooling: the context, the school, the classroom and the student levels. The main idea is similar to the other two models that were reported: the higher levels of the system guide and support the lower levels (see Figure 8). The levels encompass various elements, which interact and influence each other having between them one-way communication. The context level encompasses elements such as the national policy; rules and financing that guide the school level. The school level encompasses those factors that support the conditions to make classrooms working places. According to the model the classroom level is the most important one. Teaching and learning is taking place in the classrooms, and teachers are the most important component in the instruction process. Finally, the student level encompasses the characteristics of the students and factors such as opportunity to learn, and motivation.

The three models are based on a review of the international literature of SE research. At the same time they are the result of the need to produce a theory on SE research or at least to make use of SE research funding in an applicable way that will promote effectively pupils learning. Although the three models have considerable strengths, they have three basic limitations:

1. They do not explain how each level of the model interacts with the other and what the specific processes that promote effectiveness of each level, between the levels and between the elements of each level are.
2. There is a need for two-way communication between the levels of the model and for feedback from the lower levels of the system to the higher levels so that improvement and change could be possible for all levels of the model.
3. They are based on the studies that took place in the western countries, therefore cannot be applied to other contexts of the world.

Figure 8, shows the Creemers' Model (1994a).

Figure 8. The Creemers' Model (1994a)



3.7. Teacher effectiveness studies

This study will investigate the factors that contribute to effective schools. The studies at classroom and teacher level search for the factors that contribute to effective teaching and the teaching techniques that occur within a classroom. It is acknowledged that teacher effectiveness (TE) is taking place on a different level than SE. Nevertheless, in this section I will discuss studies of TE because the impact of SE on pupil performance largely happens via TE, which encompasses classroom factors and class teaching techniques. Scheerens and Bosker (1997) explain this as a step-by-step, causal process where Effectiveness (promoting school characteristics) influences the Conditions for effective instruction, which influence pupils' performance. Munro (1999, p.151) acknowledges "While organizational aspects of schools provide the necessary preconditions for effective teaching, it is the quality of teacher-student interactions that determines it. It is reasonable then, to expect a strong nexus between teacher effectiveness and school effectiveness". In addition he adds that "Teacher effectiveness, or more appropriately, teaching effectiveness, is intimately related to school effectiveness. School effectiveness will improve in parallel with change in teaching effectiveness" (p.170).

Sproule (2000) and Trout (2000) argue that teacher effectiveness has not been properly defined. Ornstein (1991) points out that the literature on TE is a chaos of ill-defined and changing concepts. Some researchers focus on teacher personalities, behaviours, attitudes, and many other personal characteristics. Some other researchers are more concerned with the teaching process or the teaching outcomes. Factors that influenced effectiveness included structured teaching, use of learning time, provision of the opportunity to learn, monitoring student progress, students' self-perceptions as learners, and attitudes to school and high expectations (Holdaway & Johnson, 1993; Mortimore, 1993; Scheerens, 1992; Stoll & Fink, 1994). Criticisms have been specified on the underlying philosophy, methodologies and

findings in TE studies because they suggested that the existing knowledge of TE could not be successful in explaining or analysing the complexity of TE (Ryan, 1986; Needles and Gage 1991; Cheng, 1995). According to Cheng (1995) during the past decades, the studies might emphasize different aspects of TE and only few powerful generalizations concerning TE have been established (Borich, 1986; Ornstein, 1986). As suggested by Anderson (1991), effective teachers are those who achieve the goals they set by themselves or the goals set for them by others such as school principles, education administrators, and parents. According to Cheng and Tsui (1996, p.8) “one in order to understand teacher effectiveness must be based on the linkages between teacher competence, teacher performance and set goals or expected educational outcomes”.

The TE research started in the mid 1960's and was focused on the characteristics of the teachers and their personality. Medley and Mitzel (1963) and Gage (1965) study the effectiveness of certain characteristics of teachers. Their findings did not show any consistency between pupils' achievement and the characteristics of the teachers. Later on the TE research was focused on the qualities, attitudes and behaviors of teachers in the classroom by using observation. Lortie (1973), e.g., using teachers' observation during lessons found that teacher behavior had an impact on pupil performance. This kind of research found patterns that describe the effective teachers and specific characteristics were identified. Rosenshine (1979) found that effective teachers have a tendency to actively teach, demonstrating or interacting the whole class. Brophy and Good (1986) report that direct instruction is the best method to teach procedures, rules and basic skills especially to younger students.

Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) found that clearly structured lessons that used a variety of methods in order to help students with different learning styles was a very effective

teaching strategy. Other studies found that questioning is a key element of effective teaching (Bennett et al., 1981; Brophy and Good, 1986).

Another important characteristic of the effective teacher was the classroom management and the way that the teacher manages pupils in the classroom (e.g. appropriate seating arrangements, establishing clear rules) (Kounin, 1970; Wragg, 1995).

Classroom climate has been identified as an important component of student achievement (Mortimore et al., 1988; Fraser, 1994; OECD, 1994; Wang, Haertel and Walberg, 1997). Fraser (1994) reports that a warm, supportive classroom climate is linked to a number of factors such as students' self esteem. In addition, Cotton (1997) identifies that a warm, supportive classroom climate empowers students' participation in the classroom and students' democratic values. Creating a positive climate was identified as a prime characteristic of quality teachers in a study of OECD (1994).

Nowadays, the role of teachers is expected to be broad; affective, moral and welfare in orientation as well as cognitive. TE might therefore be required to incorporate measures of effectiveness across these different roles. Furthermore, empirical studies of teachers' work (e.g. Campbell & Neill, 1994; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2001) showed that teachers typically spend less than half their working time on classroom instruction, with a range of extra-classroom activities (e.g. administrative and clerical tasks, lesson preparation, marking, report writing, meetings, curriculum development, social and welfare tasks with pupils and parents). Studies across the world have shown that under reform initiatives, the significance of work outside classrooms increases, (e.g. Campbell & Neill, 1994; Tedesco, 1997; Day, 2000; Klette, 2000; Bajunid, 2000).

In this section some of the most important findings on TE research were discussed and that TE is intimately related to SE. In addition, the researchers and the practitioners

acknowledge that many other studies must be done to analyse the complexity of TE using valid and reliable methods.

3.8. School Improvement Research

The SI movement has expanded mainly during the past two decades. Actually, at the beginning, SI was seen as an approach that should be used at the teacher level in order to develop teachers' characteristics, attitudes and behavior in promoting effectively pupil's learning. In other words, the studies used the teacher effectiveness literature as an instrument for teacher improvement and development. Later SI research moved to the level of the classroom and the school because it was recognised that change and improvement should be focused not only on the teacher level, but also the classroom and school level. The researchers realized that improvement should involve all areas of schooling giving the chance for all the elements to improve and cooperate. Nowadays, it is recognised that any SI project should encompass approaches for organizational and cultural change, involvement of all levels of school and outside agencies, focus upon classroom and student learning, as well as upon school conditions that facilitate this (Stoll et al., 1997).

However, what do we mean by the term SI? Do all authors give the same meaning? Weindling (1994, p.144) identified "SI should be seen as a systematic attempt to improve teaching and learning which has as its focus the classroom and school". Weindling emphasised that SI should be seen as a systematic approach. This characteristic is extremely important because the strength of any SI plan is that is trying to improve a specific area of schooling that has been identified as problematic or ineffective at the school and/or classroom level. If we want to introduce new ways or even different ways of doing things then we want a systematic approach that will give time to the responsible parties to accumulate the changes. At the same time a systematic approach will give quality to the SI plan. Stoll (1999, p.32)

defined “The ultimate goal of school improvement is to enhance pupils’ progress, achievement and development, to prepare them for the changing world – the bottom line”. According to this definition all SI plans should be aiming to improve pupils’ learning. Stoll gave attention to the classroom and pupil level. One cannot say that she neglected the other levels of schooling (context, school) because all SI plans that are taking place in any level of schooling have, directly or indirectly as their ultimate goal the improvement of pupils learning. Although Stoll and Weindling recognised that the aim of SI should be to promote pupils’ learning, Weindling gave attention to the characteristic of SI plan that it should be a systematic attempt for improvement at the classroom and school level. Special attention should be placed by all SI plans to this characteristic.

Van Velzen et al. (1985, p.48) gave a more complete definition, encompassing the dimensions of the above authors. They defined SI as: “A systematic sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively”. Analysing this definition one will recognise three dimensions that according to Van Velzen et al. are essential in any SI approach: (a) The approach should be a systematic effort, (b) The approach should aim to change the learning conditions and other related internal conditions on the school and (c) The ultimate aim of the approach should be the accomplishment of school’s educational goals more effectively. The above definition has many strong points because SI research should be a systematic effort with clear objectives to be revealed after a systematic evaluation in the various areas of schooling. In other words, any SI project should be the final result of a systematic evaluation approach, which revealed the weaknesses and areas for improvement and development in all levels of schooling. Harris (2000, p.3) also recognised the need of any SI plan to impact on all levels of schooling: “The premise of this work (SI) is that neither external nor internal strategies for school improvement will affect the progress of

students, unless the strategy impacts at the same time at different levels within the school". SI should be the beginning of the application of any long-term improvement and development plan, which was formed based on the outcomes of the evaluation approach.

Hopkins (1996) and Hopkins et al. (1998) discussed the need for any SI plan to enhance change and school's ability to manage change: "(SI is) A strategy for educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity for managing change" (Hopkins, 1996, p.32). "SI is an approach to educational change that focuses on student achievement and schools' ability to cope with change" (Hopkins et al.,1998, p.261). Here the authors recognised that SI is connected with change. Any SI plan encompasses change because the ultimate aim is to change the conditions of schooling at any level that was recognised as problematic or weak.

This issue of change has many implications because although a SI plan might be perfectly designed, if the school does not have the necessary conditions to accept and establish change, no improvement will occur. Before implementing any SI plan one must have the co-operation of all responsible parties that will work together to make change and improvement possible.

Studying the above definitions and thoughts, I will give my definition of the term SI. I will consider SI as: A systematic approach, planned after an evaluation of a specific school and/or district in order to identify its weaknesses in the four levels of schooling. At the same time it is a systematic plan that aims to improve the learning conditions of pupils in order to improve their achievements. While forming the above definition I considered carefully whether I should include the context level as one of the areas of schooling in which any SI plan should be applied. In the end I came to the conclusion that it should be one of the components of any SI plan because the school is a system and systems interact, affect and get affected by the environment and sub-systems that are around them. The context level is the

environment or even an essential part of the environment. Therefore, it is one of the areas of schooling that any SI plan should give attention to because it influences the other three levels. For example, if teachers feel disappointment because their salaries are low, then this will lead to low morale and motivation even though other areas of schooling do not show problems.

3.8.1. School Improvement Initiatives:

In this section I will briefly review some of the most well known SI initiatives in order to understand the way that SI researchers and practitioners work. By understanding the way that SI movement works, it enables us to discuss later in this chapter the links between SE and SI research. Also it allows us to make judgments about its movement's knowledge, methodology and aims.

The first project that I will review is the "Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA)" which started in 1991. The project (Ainscow et al., 1994) was designed using knowledge, approaches and methods from the SI and SE research and was based on six assumptions:

1. SI will result in enhanced student and staff outcomes.
2. School culture, a blend of the values, beliefs and norms of the people who work in the school, is vital to the improvement process.
3. The school's background and organizational structure are key factors in the school improvement process.
4. SI is most successful when there is a clear and practical focus for development.
5. The school needs to work on certain conditions at the same time as the curriculum or other priorities (staff development, student involvement, enquiry and reflection, leadership, coordination and planning).
6. A school improvement strategy needs to be developed to link priorities to these conditions.

At the beginning a contract was agreed between each school staff, the LEA and the project team. Each school selected its own priorities for development and its own methods to achieve them. Special attention was paid to staff development events. The results of the project showed that specific conditions were the key to facilitate effective teaching and high quality outcomes. These conditions had to do with the finding of researchers that “teachers talk about teaching”. Furthermore these conditions were:

- Teachers discussing with each other the nature of teaching strategies and their application to classroom practice and schemes of work.
- Establishing specifications or guidelines for the chosen teaching strategies.
- Agreeing on standards used to assess student progress as a result of employing a range of teaching methods.
- Mutual observation and partnership teaching in the classroom.

The second project that I will review is the “Halton’s Effective Schools Project” in Ontario-Canada (Stoll and Fink, 1992). This project used SE research into the schooling practices. It was a top-down approach that tried to implement research findings in a practical way that would change the practices used at that point of time in schooling. To be more specific, at the beginning they produced a model of the characteristics of effective schools based on the international literature on SE research and especially on the work of Mortimore et al. (1988). They used the evidence of school development plans in school districts where change had been successful. Then they used data from the following areas to assess schools in order to be able to implement the development in the various areas of schooling:

1. Teachers, pupils and parents questionnaires on SE indicators and school’s performance.
2. Curriculum and instructional practices.
3. Districts initiatives.
4. Information related to students’ progress and development.

In the next phase they implemented change and development in the various areas of schooling using various methods and approaches based on three key directions:

1. Growth planning process itself (e.g. increased staff involvement in decision-making, clear decision-making structures).
2. Focus on instruction.
3. Emphasis on staff development (e.g. building a collaborative culture and common vision within the school).

The “Schools Make a Difference” (SMAD) project was introduced in 1993. The project (Myers, 1996) was designed on SE research findings and based on nine principles:

1. Students need to believe that schooling can be worthwhile and relevant.
2. Students’ intellectual, personal and technical abilities, aptitudes and capabilities are recognised and valued, and that expectations of progress and performance are high.
3. Students will be encouraged to develop their capabilities as responsible, thoughtful and active citizens if learning is challenging and relevant.
4. Good behaviour is a necessary condition for effective learning, and that students take responsibility for their own behavior and display a high level of engagement in a well-structured learning process.
5. Parental involvement is vital and should be sought.
6. All staff in the schools are involved in, and committed to the school’s development.
7. Schools and the community work towards a shared vision and that a professional learning community is created within schools.
8. Headteachers have a vital role to play in providing a climate where development can occur.
9. "A plan, do and review” approach is systematically and rigorously applied.

Participation in the project was optional. In the first phase meetings between all the participants (headteachers, senior management teams, coordinators et cetera.) were held.

Then the coordinators of each school established a project working team with representatives from the staff, and in some case from students, parents and governors, which was responsible for designing the project plan. In the next phase the project plan was introduced to schools. According to the self-evaluation process each school produced its own success criteria and performance indicators.

The last project that will be reviewed is the “Improving Schools Project” (Hopkins, Reynolds and Gray, 1999). The project was designed to investigate how schools become effective over time, what strategies or combination of strategies work best to improve schools at different levels of effectiveness. The study included case studies of thirteen secondary schools from three English LEAs. The case studies showed that these schools were “improving” by different amounts over the years using prior attainment data for individual pupils at age eleven combined with data upon their examination performance at GCSE.

The results showed four themes that have to do with the “improving school” processes: multiple starting point of each school, the complex interactive and intuitive nature of school improvement strategies, the missing instructional level, and the importance of context. Due to the different levels of effectiveness and with different improvement trajectories, the schools exhibited contrasting routes to improvement. The three routes were: tactics, strategies and capacities for further improvement.

3.9. Linking SE and SI

The characteristics of effective schools as they have been discussed in the previous chapter may be considered as a knowledge base and framework for school development and improvement. This identification does not mean that the findings of SE research are panacea or “truths of life”. They are findings that every researcher and practitioner should use in their work as in any other area of educational research. Mortimore et al. (1988, pp.261-262)

recognised that the characteristics of effective schools were not a recipe for effective schooling that every educational system should follow, but: “They can provide a framework within which the various partners in the life of the school-headteacher and staff, parents and pupils, and governors can operate”. On the other hand, the possibilities that the SE research gives us to understand schools makes people enthusiastic. They see that based on organizational and cultural changes within the school we can provide schools with the knowledge to work in areas that did not work before in order to promote pupils learning. Pupils’ background characteristics may determinate much of their progress but schools do make a difference. Lezotte (1989, p.824) gives this meaning by outlining that:

“The story of the effective schools movement is one of expanding organisation and evolving enthusiasm from local, to district, to state, to national and now international levels. It seems clear that quality and equity for all our schools is a vision within our grasp”.

It is worth considering what should be the role of SE research findings as well as any list of the characteristics of effective schools when SE researchers do not see their lists as blueprints but as a framework for research. The need for constant development and improvement in education implies that we must identify, through research, all those areas of schooling that must and can change. On the other hand, the SI research can provide us with the knowledge and methodology that change and development can be achieved so that we will make schools more effective. Weindling (1994, p.157) stated in which way SE and SI research could be related. What is particularly interesting about this idea is that we will have a way of integrating the SE and the SI traditions: “To begin the process of school improvement, heads and staff need to review the school’s strengths and weaknesses on each of the school effectiveness factors in order to establish priorities for the school development plan”.

SE and SI traditions have basic differences. The SE research focuses on schools’ outcomes and the “value-added” concept of effectiveness and provides us with the knowledge

about the factors within schools and classrooms that can be changed to produce more effective schools, which will be recognised for their quality in pupils' learning and development. SE research has tended to view organisational development in terms of structural change, while the SI research has conversely placed an emphasis upon the cultural dimensions of organisational change. The SI research focuses on the procedure of change in order to make schools and classrooms higher quality and that many of SE research findings are tested in practice. All educational systems want schools to improve, better quality in pupils' learning and to raise pupils' achievements. However, there is still little consensus on exactly how schools can achieve this in practice or even how it is possible for schools to identify their need for improvement in the various areas of schooling. Bollen (1997, p.17) argues that:

“While effectiveness research deals with characteristics of a measurable nature which are mostly correlates in statistical overviews, school improvement focuses on processes and tries to describe them in case stories. It is clear that a case study is still a story and that a knowledge base founded on case stories might not be reliable in all aspects”.

It is obvious that different approaches are used in the two traditions. This has resulted in a methodological and theoretical division that few years ago proved difficult to resolve. Even though that is true, this must not be seen as a fundamental problem because the two traditions have different aims and it is logical to have different approaches. The main argument is that both movements must join their forces in such a way that they will promote pupils' learning and achievements. All the outcomes of SE research must be placed in a frame giving researchers the necessary information to organise their SE research according to the state of the school that they examine so that all stakeholders can produce a development plan for SI. The SI field encompasses three key concepts: reviewing and evaluating, change and innovation, action research and action learning (Harris et al, 1996). This field must be linked with SE research's findings in improving and developing schools, based on the specific

research findings and not on assumptions. SE research shows us which of the many activities that we do, have benefits for pupils while SI shows us how can we make our school better than it is now (Stoll, 1996). The two fields need each other. The SE researchers can provide the knowledge for school improvers about factors within schools and classrooms that can be changed to make schools more successful (Reynolds et al. 1993).

3.10. Summarising

In this chapter I examined some of the most important findings on SE and TE research; the factors that contribute to effective schools; the SE Models; the meaning of the term SI; some of the most well-known SI plans were reported, and finally the links between SE and SI. The knowledge on SE is very rich on research findings, which can add to our understanding of SE and on the process, conditions that can make a school effective or more effective. As the researchers report, their findings are not panacea or indisputable. Their findings can be discussed and criticized by anyone that is interested in schooling. But most of all the: “Researchers should take more care in specifying the conditions under which their findings (in SE research) hold” (Fuller, 1987, p. 288). Only in this way we can produce a debate on SE research where all the findings will be discussed in a way that will add to our understanding on SE. In addition, the link between SE and SI is an issue of extreme interest. It is true that that both movements should “abandon their camp” and move forward. This is something that has been achieved during the last decade where we can find researchers from both traditions working together in various projects and/or publications (e.g. Stoll and Mortimore, 1995; Hopkins and Reynolds, 1999; Hopkins, Reynolds and Gray, 1999). We can find SI projects using SE research findings in their design (e.g. Ainscow et al., 1994; Stoll and Fink, 1992). Nowadays authors, researchers and practitioners see these two traditions as one and the one is completing the other (Reynolds et al., 2000).

CHAPTER 4. KEY ISSUES IN SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will identify the most important issues that the SE research movement has identified and I will discuss the criticisms of SE research.

4.2. Key issues in School Effectiveness Research

Any educational movement has specific questions to answer. The SE movement has three main questions to answer: (a) What do we mean by the term SE/Effective School? (b) What methods is SE research using? (c) How do we use any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools?

4.2.1. What do we mean by the term SE/Effective School?

A key issue for SE research is the definition of the term SE. Does every researcher give the same definition or meaning to this term? What do we search to find in any SE research? Reynolds et al. (1994, p.93) reported that “The lack of a common operational definition of an effective school may cause problems in comparing results across a variety of studies ranging in such operational definitions”. If every researcher is searching for different things or gives a different meaning to SE then the results of the various SE studies cannot be compared or discussed in a manner that will promote SE research in a productive way.

Edmonds (1979, p.16) defined SE as the ability of the school to “Bring the children of the poor to those minimal masteries of basic school skills that now describe minimally successful pupil performance for the children of the middle class”. This definition implies that poor children are less able than those of the middle or the upper class and that are in a worse position as far as their development. This assumption however cannot be accepted. It is very difficult to determine the levels of minimally successful pupil performance for

children of the middle class in order for the poor children to be able to try to reach them. Also, the school must have the ability to recognise the needs of its pupils and environment's needs, and work under those given conditions in promoting its goals. In addition, the school must have the ability to maximize all pupils' development. A school should be effective for all its pupils and for all aspects of schooling and not only those of the poor, middle or upper class.

Mortimore (1991a) defined a school as effective when students' progress, in consideration of its intake, is further than might be expected. It is a school that adds extra value to the outcomes of its student in comparison with other schools serving similar intakes. In other words if a school is expected to achieve 70% of the predetermined goal, due to its intakes, and it in fact achieves more, then this school is considered as effective. Analysing Mortimore's definition one can recognise that in order to make judgements on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a school, one must then compare it with schools serving similar intakes. But we also need to look for specific goals and objectives that the school can achieve, and if those are possible to achieve then one can compare it with schools that have the same goals and objectives. Levine and Lezotte (1990) defined effectiveness as the production of a desired result or outcome. This definition, even though it is not complete, sets the direction that SE must be judged according to its goals and objectives.

Sammons (1994) argued that the definitions of SE depend upon a variety of factors such as the sample of schools examined, choice of outcome measures, adequate control for differences between schools in intakes to ensure that "like is compared with like", methodology, timescale et cetera. Although Sammons set the directions of a definition of SE, in the end she did not propose a specific definition encompassing all those characteristics and directions that could form a complete definition. Likewise Stoll and Fink (1996) identified four aspects that should be investigated in order to define a school as effective:

1. If it promotes progress for all its pupils beyond what would be expected.

2. If it ensures that each pupil achieves the highest standards possible.
3. If it enhances all aspects of pupil achievement and development.
4. If it continues to improve from year to year.

Their identification of the four aspects is very important because they set at the centre of SE research the pupil, and yet they do not neglect the role of the school as a learning organisation that must continue to improve from year to year. Here again it is clear that the value-added concept of pupils is the ultimate criterion for estimating effectiveness. But White (1997) argues that effectiveness is seen by many SE researchers (Stoll and Mortimore, 1995, Scheerens, 1992) as a value-neutral term, having to do simply with causal relationships between Xs-effective and Ys-outcomes leading to the study of effectiveness a wholly empirical matter, something solely for scientific investigation. And if the ends of school effectiveness research are taken for granted, they might not be questioned.

Even though it is not easy to define the term SE, acknowledging and studying the above definitions and thoughts, I would consider a school to be effective if it could satisfy two preconditions. If it could achieve its goals that were set: (a) At the beginning of the school year by the staff, parents and pupils and (b) By the government as national standards. In the word "goals" one must give such a meaning that will encompass all those qualities that lead to a really educated person, able to adjust to the needs of the post-modern world. The whole set of goals must encompass cognitive, psychological, and behavioral goals, which must be realistic and inclusive. The dimension of the period of school life that must be investigated in order to find out if schools' intakes (cognitive, attitude and behavior) were achieved acknowledging the family background and inputs of each child's development and value added must be taken into consideration. What is particularly interesting about this idea is that some goals will be short-term, others medium-term and others long-term. This raises the issue of the evaluation of schools' goals that will gain real meaning. The evaluation will not be the

result of empirical outcomes but it will be the result of a specific planning according to the goals of the school.

4.2.2. What methods is SE research using?

How can one practise SE research? Which method is the most appropriate in a SE study?

Some researchers use quantitative or qualitative methods, others use a compilation of these two, others use case studies, direct observation or multilevel modelling techniques (Mortimore et al., 1988) et cetera. Some studies use large samples and follow pupils over a period of years; others use small samples over a short period of time et cetera. Whichever the method or sample size the researcher is using he/she must act according to the following directions:

1. The complexity of SE research.
 2. What a researcher is looking for must be clear (specific research questions).
 3. The choice of the appropriate research method and sample is the researcher's responsibility.
- The researcher must take into consideration similar researches, their findings, and limitations before planning and practicing their research.

The issue of which factors researchers give more attention to relates to the methodology of SE research. If the researchers know what they are looking for, then they will make the necessary choices as far as sample size and methodology are concerned. Researchers in the international literature concentrate on various factors, e.g.:

- ▶ Attempts at innovation and deliberate interventions intended to change existing practices (Fullan, 1982, Leithwood et al., 1979).
- ▶ TE and effective leadership (O' Neil, 1988, Renihan and Renihan, 1984).

- ▶ Teachers, student and parent levels of satisfaction-school ethos, level of spending, emphasis on SE from the classroom and individual school to school district level, leaving accountability, change, role of the community (Coleman and LaRocque, 1990).
- ▶ Multilevel relationship among inputs, processes and outcomes of schools and uses multiple criteria to indicate effectiveness (Cheng, 1986, 1991).
- ▶ Effect of streaming procedures, school sizes, centralisation of schools and content matters, student attitudes and achievements in schools (Sandven, 1971, 1972).
- ▶ The headteacher's support and relationship with the staff et cetera.

All these factors contribute to the frame of school effectiveness research and must be taken into consideration in a school effectiveness research. But every time one must be able to pay attention to schools' particular characteristics and to those factors that can and do make a difference to its effectiveness.

4.2.3. How do we use any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools?

A third issue in SE research is the use of any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools and if we can use any list in order to make ineffective schools effective or effective schools more effective. If this is not possible then there is no need to spend so much effort and money in studies whose findings cannot be used in a local or international context. Much research underlines the fact that SE results do not provide a blueprint or recipe for the creation of more effective schools (Edmonds, 1979, Purkey and Smith, 1983, Reid, Hopkins and Holly, 1987, Mortimore et al., 1988, Stoll and Fink, 1992, Sammons, 1994). The realization that every school is founded upon certain conditions and tries to achieve certain goals and aims are very important. Every school is unique, has its own characteristics shaped by factors such as staff, location, pupils, size, resources, national influence et cetera. The generalisation of any characteristics of effective schools must be seen as a framework for national and local

research. One must pay attention to the fact that different characteristics were found in different types and structures of different countries. In some cases, even though the countries had the same or similar structures, different characteristics were acknowledged as key factors of effective schools. Why do countries differ so much in the quantity and the quality of their knowledge bases? What is the contribution of the various countries in terms of school effectiveness? The results of SE studies are unlikely to be directly transferable to other contexts. There are no simple compilations of factors, which contribute to an effective school (Reynolds and Cuttance, 1992, Willms, 1992). But much research revealed that certain factors are common in more effective schools (Purkey and Smith, 1983, Gray, 1990, Firestone, 1991, Mortimore 1991a, 1993). The researchers and the practitioners must see any list of factors that contribute to effective schools as an overall concept of 'ethos' in which one must work on all the characteristics at one time (Rutter et al., 1979).

4.3. Critique of School Effectiveness research

“‘Why do educational research?’ is the starting point for educational researchers to begin to think about how to put their research passion into action” (Phillion and Fang He, 2001, p.62). Where we should be without educational research is not hard to imagine. Educational research should be seen as synonymous with development and improvement. Educational research and critique are formulated simultaneously. Critique is essential because education is like a living organism, which develops through time. Only static organisms cannot be criticized because no changes occur. So it is essential for SE research to be criticized by other educational researchers. Not only by researchers within the SE tradition but also external researchers or scholars who view things under a different perspective or are interested in a different context of education. In this way it will be possible for educational researchers to build up a debate for every educational issue in such a way that criticism will be seen as a fundamental part of

educational procedure. Pring (2000, p.78) discussed the issue of criticism in educational research identifying that:

"A criticism of educational research is that it does not create a body of knowledge upon which policy-makers and professionals can rely. First, a lot of the research is small scale and fragmented and there is no cumulative growth of such knowledge. Second, educational discourse seems to be full of people criticizing others research such that there is nothing conclusively verified-no knowledge. Research conclusions seem more like transient beliefs than well-established knowledge".

From the moment that people ask questions to investigate various issues, it is expected that people would not feel comfortable about many issues and will start criticizing. As Peterson (1998, p.9) reported: "We can not sit quietly in our office waiting for someone to call and ask our opinions. We have to search out events in which we can learn to insert our voice."

Criticism in education is essential because education was formed by the society, for the society, so all the stakeholders must have something to say about it. Mortimore (1991a, p.226) argues that: "It is obvious that criticism of published work is essential. It is only through criticism that work is improved, even though there is a danger that well-published disagreements may reduce public confidence in the value of research."

One must recognise that any criticism of the SE research must be based on educational research outcomes because only in this way can we improve the ways that SE research is conducted. The philosophical arguments on SE research can only provide unreliability and lack of confidence among education's stakeholders.

Scott (2000, p.74) discussed the findings of SE research and suggested that:

"Any discursive field must establish three sets of criteria before it can be considered to be fully formed:

- 1. It has to have created a set of criteria by which its knowledge may be evaluated.*
- 2. It needs to have formalized a set of definitional criteria, which includes and excludes what is considered proper knowledge.*
- 3. It needs to be able to offer a set of methodological criteria with which an initiate may operate-a set of procedures, which delineate a practitioner from a non-practitioner."*

Looking at Scott's set of criteria one may come up with the following queries:

1. The establishment of a set of criteria by which SE research knowledge can be evaluated would be a shortcoming because it is as if we were setting limits and regulations or criteria under which a SE study can be conducted. Researchers must find their way, looking for new directions that will develop the SE studies. The only set of criteria that we can set are all those that are accepted for any other educational research (e.g. validity, reliability, ethical issues). Any other formal set of criteria will divide the SE tradition and at the same time, will lead SE research to a dead-end in which SE studies will reproduce themselves.
2. SE knowledge cannot be categorised into proper and improper knowledge by formalizing a set of definitive criteria. The only thing one can do is to criticise SE studies that do not use valid and reliable methods of research.
3. No methodological criteria can be established with which an initiate can operate, which delineate a practitioner from a non-practitioner. The answer is given in the same way as the previous thought by saying that one can criticise SE studies that do not use valid and reliable methods of research and not because of the person that conducted the research. How to practice SE research is a question that all SE researchers consider before they research. Whichever the method or sample size the researchers are using they must acknowledge the complexity of SE research and what they are looking for.

In the following pages, the critique of SE research will be reviewed and the shortcomings of it will be explained distinguishing the critique in seven sub-categories.

4.3.1. The acknowledgement of a universally accepted definition of the term SE. Most critiques (e.g. Reynolds et al., 1994, White, 1997) of SE research are based on the inability of researchers to acknowledge a universally accepted definition of the term SE or “effective

school”. This issue is fundamental (see also Chapter 3). If SE studies look for different things then it is impossible for any researcher to establish a knowledge on which it will be possible to produce an accepted theory for effective schooling. In addition, it is very difficult to produce complete models for SE because SE knowledge is incomplete or in the best case scenario its findings are not triangulated, even though some studies identify similar findings (e.g. Mortimore et al., 1988, Levine and Lezotte, 1990) because in the SE literature there are more reviews of SE studies than actually SE studies.

Although a commonly accepted definition on SE is not essential, (surely it would be better if one could be established) a common understanding is essential and for the benefit of SE movement. SE researchers will be able to discuss issues of validity, reliability and ethics in a productive way and will be able to give strong answers to the critics on SE research. I, therefore, feel that this should be one of the issues of SE research for discussion in future debates.

4.3.2. The methodology used in the various SE studies and the choice of outcomes (the value-added concept). The main criticism on this category is the use of the value-added concept in SE research. The studies use this concept, which encompasses multi level modeling and complex statistical tools, in order to report the development of pupils’ achievements using GCSE results or similar test results, such as LRT et cetera. This method has been criticized because many educational researchers do not accept that the results in one, two or even three specific tests after taking into consideration pupil’s background factors, can give a clear picture about one child’s progress because education is more than test results. SE research must be able to systematically compare schools on a much wider range of considerations, e.g., including the fostering of critically and politically aware citizens, social attitude and behavior. Fielding (1997, p.9) argues, “The current preoccupation with

increasingly sophisticated measures of added value betrays a myopic understanding of what is meant by an effective school". In addition to the above critics Anyon (1997) and Thrupp (2001) criticized the role of student background and student composition in SE studies. They argued that SE studies emphasize that school effects are due to 20% on school and classroom factors and not that 80% of school effects are due to background and student composition trying to explain from a sociology point of view why these differences exist. Thrupp (2001, pp.20-21) talked about "*narrow agenda*" and "*small victories*" of SE research neglecting the society and the changes for improvement of student background.

Teddlie, Reynolds and Sammons (2000, pp.55-133) discussed this issue of the methodology used by the various SE studies in detail. In their discussion they report hundreds of SE studies used different methods and approaches. The strengths and weaknesses of each method are reported. In addition, it is useful to conduct studies searching for the same things under different circumstances using different research methods. In such a way, one can study things clearly and not in from a one-dimensional approach. On the other hand, SE research would be in a chaotic situation but as I discussed earlier, only basic characteristics of an educational research should be necessary (e.g. validity, reliability, ethic issues). Before conducting SE research, the researchers must understand the complexity of SE research, what they are looking for and the results of similar SE studies. What methodology is used in a SE research depends on the way that SE research is viewed by the researcher and on their general understanding of various issues of the education such as aims, objectives, believes et cetera.

SE research must be able to suggest changes in schooling that will promote effectiveness more that the narrow concept of school and classroom level. The SE paradigm must be able to suggest ideas, areas for study and why not solutions in all levels of schooling (context, school, classroom, pupil). But one must also be realistic and pragmatic. The SE research does not aim to change and improve society in the strict concept of the term because

this is not within its aim. This is the role of sociologists and, mainly, politicians. The SE paradigm can give its ideas based on research findings but cannot discuss from a philosophical perspective what Thrupp (2000) and Anyon (1997) are suggesting. SE research findings showed that schools can make a difference in students' achievement (e.g. Mortimore et al., 1988; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Scheerens, 1992; Teddlie and Stringfield; 1993). Under this perspective one can say that its preferable to work on this “*narrow agenda*” based on SE research findings. Teddlie and Reynolds (2001, p.56) recognised “Social class and student achievement are closely linked, but we also believe that many schools can (and have) weakened that link through various practices at the school and classroom levels”. SE research is school based and its practices are used to improve the whole system in order to make schools a more effective place for students' learning.

4.3.3. The role of teachers in schools. Teaching is taking place in the classroom and for that reason teachers are responsible for most educational outcomes, whatever those are. The reports of unsatisfactory results or of ineffective schools and departments in many SE studies (e.g. Fitz-Gibbon et al., 1989) can be interpreted as incompetence of the classroom teachers, even though many times this is not the truth or is not reported by the studies and other reasons are given for those results. Consequently, the society often understands that teachers must be blamed for education's ineffectiveness. Reporting that one school is better than another is like saying that the teachers are responsible for this. Elliott (1996) argues that SE research neglects to concern itself with the long-term developmental needs of teachers. It also neglects to add the opinions of teachers to its many sources of ideas, preferring instead to give primacy and in some cases exclusivity to the voice of the SE researcher in understanding schools and classrooms. West and Hopkins (1995) argue that it seems unlikely that the majority of

teachers have learned anything of any relevance for the improvement of a single pupil's performance from current SE research.

The role of teachers must not be undervalued or overvalued in SE research. Any SE research, which investigates the role of teachers in the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a school, must have clear messages to send to the governors as far as the relations between the four levels of schooling are concerned (context, school, classroom, pupil). It is not enough to report that a school is effective or ineffective without saying what relations between those levels exist and how every one is affecting the others because we need to interpret any educational research's results into practical ways to improve schooling and pupils development.

4.3.4. The role of curriculum in SE studies. In SE studies, the curriculum is usually taken as a given, something that cannot be challenged or transformed. Angus (1993, p.343) argues that "Knowledge and curriculum are generally regarded as unproblematic, and it is assumed that students must simply learn them". Many studies place too much emphasis on the notion of progressive school management as the dynamic of change. Other SE studies fail to take full account of the characteristics of the education system as a whole and ignore the overall system within which schools operate. Even adopting all the practices revealed as "effective" would take certain schools only so far if they were locked into a local or national system where selection and polarization are taking place. Chitty (1997, p.55) argues that SE research "Shows little regard for issues of social class, it has little or nothing to say about issues of curriculum content and pedagogy". In addition, Hatcher (1996, p.37) discuss that: "SE research has nothing to say about the central issue for understanding the construction of educational inequality: the interaction between pupil cultures and the official culture of the school, at the centre of which is the curriculum".

The above references discuss the issue of the role and structure of any curriculum. Any curriculum's structure promotes, or at least it should promote, society's development and improvement. A curriculum must take into account society's needs, characteristics and pre-conditions for successful development and improvement. That is why one can see statements like "The school curriculum should aim to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life" (QCA, 1999, p.5) because they express society's needs and beliefs.

Any researcher, and especially the SE researchers must not accept the curriculum as unproblematic and unchangeable. But one must look at ways that can improve any national curriculum and the possibility that schooling can be organised in the interest of all pupils and not of dominant ethnic groups or the ruling classes (Fielding, 1997). Reynolds and Teddlie (2001, p.341) recognised this limitation of SE research over the last three decades in not investigating the role of the curriculum. In addition they report:

"Whilst the neglect of curricular issues is not surprising, there is now the possibility that such neglect may be damaging the field. Partly this is because the reluctance to think about curricular issues cuts the field off from the very widespread discussions now in progress about the most appropriate bodies of knowledge that should be in the schools of a "post modern age" or an "information economy and society"."

The SE research must look into issues like curriculum context, characteristics, and curriculum's effectiveness because the context in some areas of the curriculum is not appropriate or it might be advanced for specific groups of pupils. This also has to do with the aims of schooling. No one can accept that a ten-year-old curriculum can and does reflect the needs and knowledge of the post-modern age. A curriculum that will promote all groups of pupils learning and at the same time will prepare them for real life and the society is needed. DES (1997, p.4) reports that:

"If we are prepared successfully for the twenty-first century we will have to do more than just improve literacy and numeracy skills. We need a broad, flexible and

motivating education that recognises the different talents of all children and delivers excellence for everyone”.

An example about the importance of the curriculum is the Report of the appraisal study of the Cyprus Education System that was given by a team from UNESCO (1997) to the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus, which found the curriculum to be problematic. Suggestions were made in order to make the curriculum more pleasant, enjoyable, effective and modern. If these suggestions are not taken into account then what changes can be made in order to make the whole system more effective? This example strengthens the need for SE research to investigate the role of the curriculum in SE studies and to suggest changes and improvement. According to my understanding, this must be one of the future issues that will be investigated by SE research.

4.3.5. The role of SE research in government’s educational policy. Governments or government departments funded some SE studies and projects in the early stages of SE research e.g. Coleman et al., 1966. That is something that can be recognised just by reviewing SE studies mainly in the UK and the USA. Therefore, many questions arise about the aims of SE research and its connection to governmental bodies. It is obvious that from the moment that authors express their disagreement in the connection of SE research and government’s policy we must be able to discuss the perspectives and aims of SE research, issues like schooling and it’s connection with social, political and cultural processes (Chitty, 1997). Thrupp (2001) discusses the inability of SE movement to control the political use of SE research findings. In addition, Elliot (1996, p.199) carries its discussion one step further arguing that because SE researchers “Seek to win political friends and exercise influence in the political arena, SE researchers rarely present their findings as controversial within the educational research community”. On the other hand, some theorists see SE research as a way

for misdirecting society's view of essential schooling issues. Fielding (1997) believes this and states that:

“SE diverts attention away from structural impediments like poverty and inequality which are conveniently no longer seen as requiring the same degree of imaginative and committed attention from governments, especially those whose political persuasions regard those issues as peripherally important” (p.11).

In addition, Benn and Chitty (1996, p.56) argue, “Effectiveness researchers mostly inhabit a homogenized sanitized world, which ignores social and cultural differences and awkward political antagonisms”.

There are two main questions: First, whether SE research was the result of governmental bodies search for effectiveness in education and; second, whether SE research was the result of the philosophical and empirical worries of educational researchers who searched for effectiveness and practical ways for improving pupils achievements and progress at school. If it is the first issue, then the critique is right to say that SE research takes too much “for granted” and that SE research expresses government policies. Angus (1993) argued that SE movement's definitions of effectiveness are usually the same as those of governments' and most conservative educational philosophers. However, if it is the second issue, then SE research has a lot to contribute to any government's educational policy, which looks for ways to improve pupils' learning. SE research has its origins in a general dissatisfaction with the “deterministic” and “pessimistic” view of schooling, which suggested that schools, teachers and education generally have little effect on the different ways different pupils perform at schools (Scott, 2000, Fielding, 1997). For that reason, by the early 1990s, the SE research paradigm was gaining considerable influence upon governments and practitioners.

On the other hand, it is also important to pay attention to the critics' attempt to understand the shortcomings in SE research or at least the misunderstandings in this kind of research. According to Benn and Chitty (1996, pp.57-58) SE and SI provided two things:

“First it provided an antidote to the pessimism and fatalism of the 1970s-and particularly to the view that schools situated in working-class neighborhoods were bound to be unsuccessful-just as much as “it provided a jolt to schools that were failing to make efforts or make changes or take “educational common sense” on board. Second it provided a much-needed warning to those who might be expecting far too little from those they taught-simply assuming they were likely to produce little”.

Theorists, researchers, practitioners and generally anyone who is interested in schooling must understand that SE research is not a governmental department or a part of any government micro-policy that seeks to find a way to implement changes in education and in schools or to avoid any crucial education issues like the curriculum, financing, teacher's education, staff development et cetera. As researchers within the SE research paradigm recognised (Teddle and Reynolds, 2001), SE research is not responsible for the way that its findings are used by politicians and does not have the means to stop this from happening. SE research must use its findings to change and improve schools. In order to achieve this, SE research must cooperate with politicians and especially with government bodies that have the responsibility and strength to implement the necessary changes. Even though changes and improvement in schools must come within the school and teachers, some changes and improvement initiations must come from top to down (e.g. curriculum and organizational changes, financing).

4.3.6. The role of any list of the characteristics of effective schools. White (1996) argues that SE often amounts to little more than empirical illustrations of tautological truths. Hamilton (1996) argues that SE studies are concerned with simplistic, often managerially based policies to improve the inevitably high complex world of schools and classrooms. Elliot (1996) discusses the factors of SE research as the products of an ideological commitment, rather than research, which merely provides a legitimating gloss to mask this fact. In addition, Slee and Weiner (2001, pp.90-91) discussed that SE research was “Forced on an often unwilling, reform-tired and sceptical teaching force, emphasis was placed on certain features

deemed to be common to effective schools: viz. professional leadership; shared vision and goals..." Studying the previous arguments, a question is raised on how one can use any list of the characteristics of effective schools. As I stated earlier, many studies underline the fact that SE results do not provide a blueprint or recipe for the creation of more effective schools. Many researchers in and out of the SE research assume that a particular set of factors makes for effective schools. This is not true because any list of the characteristics of effective schools cannot be implemented as it is. Stoll and Fink (1996, p.41) discussing this issue reported: "The characteristics can be implemented but this implementation cannot be mandated or managed from outside. It has to be sequenced according to the school's needs and will be interpreted by each school in a unique way".

The researchers and the practitioners must handle any list of factors that contribute to effective schools as an overall concept of a school culture in which they must work on all the characteristics at one time. A discussion is required if there is a need to produce a conceptual framework of the factors that contribute to effective schooling and especially in those factors that are most important in the education system concerned, and most amenable to change within the existing context. Riddell (1997) discussed the use of any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools saying that it is neither appropriate nor possible to design a generic school effectiveness study outside the context of a particular country. She moved one step further and discussed the idea of producing a SE baseline study that will be grounded in the actual context of each country:

"We need to produce a rich, multilevel baseline study that identifies the factors, contexts and processes that contribute to effective learner outcomes. Much of what this would uncover would be confirmatory in nature, but it would be grounded in the actual context of the country. This first study would be the basis for follow-up studies of the same cohort to produce measures of effectiveness over time and could be complemented by further cohort analyses. One could use this baseline to target the "most effective" and the "least effective" schools (also longitudinally), in order to follow up such identification with qualitative case studies to examine the relationships at work in such schools" (Riddell, 1997, p.203).

The SE research must look into ways of implementing any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools. Any list is knowledge, a tool that one must use and not panacea that one must implement in any school without discussion. It is one thing to know factors that can work in one situation, and a completely different thing to understand how a factor works and what processes enable it to be effective.

4.3.7. The role of SE research in ineffective schools. In the SE literature, one can find references about effective schools and very few about ineffective schools (Willmott 1999). One cannot find references on how an ineffective school can become effective and also: “Little is known about so-called “ineffective” schools in contrast to the work on effectiveness” (Sammons and Reynolds, 1997, p.134). Fitz-Gibbon (1991) argued that the preoccupations of the management of effective schools suggest a reality which is formed in its own reflection and does not leave sufficient space for doubt about their generalizability to ineffective schools or the possibility that effectiveness is more strongly linked to teacher related factors. Reynolds (1992) discussed the fact that many research studies have been about the end-result of being an effective school and have not clearly explained how to get to the destination of effectiveness. The above arguments explain the absence of any literature about the ineffective schools, which is something that SE studies should investigate. Describing situations as those of effective schools is the first step for effective schooling but the second step is describing ineffective schools, and then to produce a theory or a model of effective schooling. The claim of many SE studies that the characteristics of effective schools are not blueprints or lists that should be duplicated in any circumstances, drives us to conclusions such as the need for studies on the characteristics of ineffective schools. This is not enough because we need descriptions of all those procedures and methods that schools must take in order to place ineffective schools on the road to effectiveness. This is an area that the future

SE studies should investigate. The SI studies are occupied with ineffective schools and the areas that need to be changed or must be improved in order to make schools effective. This link between the two movements has been applied in many studies (e.g., Hopkins, 1987; Stoll and Fink, 1992; Houtveen and Osinga, 1995; Hopkins et al., 1997). That is why nowadays many authors (Reynolds et al., 2000) see the SI movement as part of the SE movement.

4.4. Summarising

In this chapter I have studied and discussed three key issues of the SE research movement: (a) What is the meaning of the term SE/Effective School? (b) What methods is SE research using? (c) How do we use any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools? Finally, seven key points of the critics that SE movement has come against were distinguished and discussed.

CHAPTER 5. AIM OF THE RESEARCH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

5.1. Introduction

University support, management, research and teaching are very important to every educational system. They are preconditions that keep the system in touch with global changes and developments in education. Overseas Development Administration (1994) identified this characteristic as one of the advantages of Education in the UK.

The Cyprus educational system has often been characterised as centralised and conservative due to the strong central power of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry holds the authority to imply changes, innovations or propose solutions to the various educational issues. In Cyprus, there is little published literature about any educational issue. The establishment of the University of Cyprus in 1992, however, has made possible the publication of studies in education and especially in educational management. One can find only few studies in SE research or in some aspects of SE research (Kyriakides, 2000; Pashiardis and Pashiardis, 2000; Gagatsis and Kyriakides, 1999; Pashiardis, 1998). This is one of the shortcomings of the Cypriot educational system because the Government and the Ministry of Education and Culture give priority to areas such as compulsory education, increase of the educational and financial efficiency of Primary Education, school accommodation requirements et cetera. Focusing on SE might be a reality in the next two-three years and a step has been taken by establishing working groups on National Standards and Indicators in Primary Education over the last couple of years.

Due to the fact that there is limited research on SE in Cyprus, the questions of this study arise from the international literature and the factors that describe effective schools. In addition the fact that only the past few years SE research has been drawn upon the perceptions of key stakeholders e.g. parents (Macbeath, 1995; SOEID, 1992) teachers (Davies and

Ellison; 1997; Townsend, 1997a; Yiasemis, 1999) pupils (Karatzias et al., 2001; Benjamin & Hollings, 1995) lead me to search the perceptions of Cypriot key stakeholders on SE.

5.2. Main Aim

The main aim of the study is to identify the key factors that contribute to effective schools in Cypriot Primary Education. These factors will be predicated on the opinions of all stakeholders. The stakeholders are the teachers, the head and deputy heads, the parents, the inspectors and the pupils of each sample school. Distributing a questionnaire and conducting interviews to the interested parties will achieve this.

5.3. Research Questions

The study will try to give an answer to the following seven research questions:

1. What are the key factors that contribute to effective schools in Cypriot Primary Education predicated on the opinions of (a) teachers, (b) headteachers and deputy heads, (c) parents, (d) inspectors-governors and (e) pupils?
2. What is the meaning of the term SE/Effective School according to the opinions of each stakeholder?
3. Are there any key factors of effective schools more important than others according to the opinions of each stakeholder and, if so, why?
4. How may knowledge about SE be turned into enhanced strategies for SI and development?
5. In what ways do teachers consider themselves as factors for SI and development?
6. In relation to 5, how can teachers improve and develop their school?
7. How can the stakeholders empower teachers to improve and develop their school?

In Table 2, one can see which research question/s each chapter of the study seeks to answer although is very difficult to set precise limits for each research question or chapter.

More than one chapter answers some research questions (e.g. chapters 2 and 3 can answer the first research question).

Table 2. Which research questions each chapter of the study seeks to answer

Research Question	Chapter of the study that seeks to answer the research question
1. What are the key factors that contribute to effective schools in Cyprus Primary Education based on the opinions of a) teachers, b) heads, c) parents, d) inspectors-governors, e) pupils?	<u>Chapter 3:</u> School Effectiveness Literature Review <u>Chapter 4:</u> Key issues in School Effectiveness Research <u>Chapter 7:</u> Results and analysis of the Questionnaire
2. What is the meaning of the term "Effective School" according to the opinions of each stakeholder?	<u>Chapter 4:</u> Key issues in School Effectiveness Research <u>Chapter 7:</u> Results and analysis of the Questionnaire <u>Chapter 8:</u> Results and Analysis of the Interviews
3. Are there any key factors of effective schools more important than others and, if so, by how much and why?	<u>Chapter 7:</u> Results and analysis of the Questionnaire <u>Chapter 8:</u> Results and Analysis of the Interviews <u>Chapter 9:</u> Discussion of Research Results
4. How may knowledge about school effectiveness be turned into strategies for school development and improvement?	<u>Chapter 4:</u> Key Issues in SE Research <u>Chapter 7:</u> Results and analysis of the Questionnaire <u>Chapter 8:</u> Results and Analysis of the Interviews <u>Chapter 9:</u> Discussion of Research Results
5. In what ways do teachers consider themselves as factors for school improvement and development?	<u>Chapter 8:</u> Results and Analysis of the Interviews <u>Chapter 9:</u> Discussion of Research Results
6. In relation to 5, how can teachers improve and develop their school?	<u>Chapter 8:</u> Results and Analysis of the Interviews <u>Chapter 9:</u> Discussion of Research Results
7. How can the stakeholders empower teachers to improve and develop their school?	<u>Chapter 8:</u> Results and Analysis of the Interviews <u>Chapter 9:</u> Discussion of Research Results

5.4. Summarising

In this Chapter a study and discussion of the main aim has been occurred. In addition the research questions and what each chapter of the study seeks to answer have been discussed.

CHAPTER 6. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

6.1. Introduction

Cohen and Manion (1991, p.99) argued “Three prerequisites to the design of any survey are the specification of (a) the exact purpose of the inquiry; (b) the population on which it is to focus; and (c) the resources that are available”. The research has those specific characteristics: a specific purpose (see "Aims of the research"); a population to focus (see "The sample"); and resources so that the research will be able to end.

6.2. Researching stakeholders' perceptions

The identification of the factors of effective schools according to the perspectives of all stakeholders (headteachers, teachers, governors, parents and pupils) is essential because education is a system and for every system the co-operation of its elements is essential. Metz (2000, p.63) reported “Groups in education (classrooms, schools et cetera) can be studied as entities with meaning systems of their own. But one must also study their relationships with other groups in order to understand them fully”. If the main focus is the SE then we need the perspectives of all stakeholders, because how can we have effective schools if the characteristics of effective schools for headteachers are different from the perspectives of teachers, governors, parents or pupils?

Many studies used questionnaires involving teachers, pupils and parents because getting information from all stakeholders is important, as they can often have a somewhat different perspective on school and classroom life. Researching people's views and understanding about SE and the factors that could lead to SE is one of the issues that focus the interest of the involved parties in schooling. Macbeath (1995) in a study of the self-evaluating schools, points out, that there has been a noticeable change in attitudes to the validity of parents and pupils views whereas, previously, it had been felt that the opinions of parents,

pupils and even staff might not be fair or insightful. In addition the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID, 1992) used ethos indicators for school self-evaluation surveying pupil, parent and staff views on a range of aspects of school ethos.

In the last decade a considerable number of studies reported the opinions and understanding of staff (Davies and Ellison; 1997; Townsend, 1997a; Yiasemis, 1999) parents (McGrew and Gilman, 1991; Goldring and Shapira, 1993; Dauber and Epstein, 1989) and pupils (Karatzias et al., 2001; Benjamin & Hollings, 1995) about SE because it is recognised that the cooperation of all interested parties in schooling is essential. Therefore it is extremely important to research the opinions of all stakeholders about SE using questionnaires and interviews.

6.3. Focus on Primary Education

The study focused on primary schools for a number of reasons:

1. Many researchers and practitioners have identified primary education as the most important aspect of a country's educational system because it sets the foundations for all future learning (Forster, 1995; Hawes and Stephens, 1990). In primary education, the pupils learn basic skills, knowledge, and attitudes that mould their personality and the way that they see and accept the world. So, the study of primary education must be seen as the first important step for effectiveness and improvement in any educational system.
2. By limiting this study's scope only to the primary education, it will give the opportunity to the researcher to discuss and analyse the results in more detail. The researcher sees this study as the first step for future studies in education, covering the areas of primary and secondary education. Differences (e.g. organizational, cultural) exist between primary and secondary schools and it is wiser to distinguish the factors that lead to SE in each situation.

3. The researcher is working in primary education and he is familiar with the situation and issues concerning primary education and effectiveness. Therefore, it would be wiser to use his experience to investigate, discuss and analyse the issues concerning primary education.
4. Access to the schools of the sample will be easier because the size of primary schools is smaller. In this way it will cover a larger number of schools and at the same time a variety of stakeholders.

6.4. Critiques of SE and how they are treated in the study

In Chapter 4 we have reviewed the critique on SE research. Therefore the critiques informed the conduct of the research in the following ways:

1. People (teachers, parents, pupils) were asked to report their understanding of the term SE so that common characteristics could be recognised into their definitions and a common understanding could be possible because although a common accepted definition on SE is not essential, a common understanding is essential.
2. Questionnaires and interviews were used to research the perspectives of all stakeholders on SE. In Cyprus no national standards, indicators or exams exist so it was not possible to use standardised, valid and reliable tests and multi level modeling and complex statistical tools, in order to report the development of pupils' achievements using value-added. The main criticism in this category is the use of the value-added concept in SE research. A SE research must be able to systematically compare schools on a much wider range of considerations, e.g., including the fostering of critically and politically aware citizens, social attitude and behavior, suggesting changes in schooling that will promote effectiveness more than the narrow concept of school and classroom level cognitive performance. The SE paradigm must be able to suggest ideas, areas for study and potential solutions in all levels of schooling (context, school, classroom, pupil).

3. Teaching is taking place in the classroom and for that reason teachers are responsible for most educational outcomes. Therefore, using teachers' sample to study their opinions about the factors that contribute to SE is very important. In addition, specific factors were included into the questionnaire (Classroom Level) describing the role of teachers.
4. The role of curriculum in SE studies is usually taken as a given, something that cannot be challenged or transformed. The SE research must not accept any curriculum as unproblematic and unchangeable but must look in ways that can improve any national curriculum. Therefore, the questionnaire used was asking about the quality of the curriculum and its importance in determining SE.
5. Government departments funded many SE studies and projects. Therefore, many questions arise about the aims of SE research and its connection to governmental bodies. This study was not conducted in connection to any government's departments although the Ministry of Education and Culture gave its permission for the conduct of this study.
6. Many studies highlight the fact that SE results do not provide a blueprint or recipe for the creation of more effective schools because any list of the characteristics of effective schools cannot be implemented as it is. Any list of factors that contribute to effective schools must be handled as an overall concept of a school culture in which all the characteristics interact. Therefore, the study will not produce a list of the factors that were recognised as important for SE. It will discuss these factors and analyse them in depth to explain how these factors work.
7. The factors that were recognised as important for SE will give knowledge about what might change in ineffective schools. But this is not enough because the research findings showed that the procedures within an ineffective school are different and specific research must be done. In addition, we know that any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools cannot be implemented as it is. New research is needed to investigate the ineffective schools. This study will not give factors that might bring about change in ineffective schools.

6.5. Methods of data collection

The data was collected using a variety of methods such as literature search, questionnaires and interviews because in this way it would add to the validity and reliability of the research. Wellington (2000, p.17) argued that "When it comes to data collection, most methods in educational research will yield both qualitative and quantitative data".

The literature research was used in the first part of the study to examine the international literature on SE and SI, to produce the questionnaires and interview schedules and in the final part of the study to analyse, discuss, and support the research findings. The questionnaires were used in the second part of the study in order to collect the data on the opinions of the stakeholders about the effective schools. The interviews were used in the third part of the study in order to investigate in-depth the data gathered from the questionnaires. In Table 3 one can see the sub-categories of the sample, the methods of data collection and the period in which each action took place.

Table 3. The sample of the research and the methods of data collection

The sample of the research	Methods of data collection	Date
<u>1. Teachers' sample:</u>		
- 12-16 teachers from each school	1. Questionnaires	1. October 2001
- Total number 150-180 teachers	2. Interviews	2. June-July 2002
<u>2. Parents' sample:</u>		
- The parents of the 6 th grade	1. Questionnaires	1. October 2001
- Total number 160-220 parents	2. Interviews	2. June-July 2002
<u>3. Pupils' sample:</u>		
- The pupils of the 6 th grade	1. Questionnaires	1. October 2001
- Total number 170-200 pupils	2. Interviews	2. June-July 2002
<u>4. Head-teachers' and deputy-heads' sample:</u>		
- 2-3 heads/deputies from each school	1. Questionnaires	1. October 2001
- 40-50 heads/deputy-heads	2. Interviews	2. Not applicable
<u>5. Inspectors' sample:</u>		
- Total number 10-15 inspectors	1. Questionnaires	1. October 2001
	2. Interviews	2. Not applicable

6.5.1. The questionnaires:

A questionnaire was used to collect the data from the teachers, parents, heads, deputy heads, inspectors and pupils of the schools (see Appendix). As Burroughs (1975, p.106) reports “The use of questionnaires in surveys provides the easiest known way of assembling a mass of information”. The questionnaire was used to gather the necessary data from the sample for the following advantages:

1. A quantitative method would allow using a large sample and the chance to discuss the sample’s opinions by generalizing the results of this survey, something that would not be possible with a qualitative method such as the use of interviews (Hayman, 1968). As I discussed earlier point 7.3.) the questionnaire was used in the second part of the study to collect the necessary data. Sprinthall et al. (1993, p.93) reported that: “When sample information is gathered, one of the uses of survey information is to generalize the results to the population from which the sample has been selected”.
2. The limited time consumed, cost and time needed for analysing the questionnaires in a large sample such as the one used in the second part of the study were a strong advantage. If interviews were used the analysis would be very difficult for such a large sample because of the subjectivity, time, cost and difficulty.
3. The use of any other method (e.g. interviews) instead of questionnaires, would be ineffective in analysing all given answers by interviewees because it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to mention the four levels of schooling and the factors of each area (see page 84).
4. By using a questionnaire, each respondent received the same set of questions phrased in exactly the same way. In addition, it is supposed to yield more comparable data than interviews do (Sax, 1979).

5. With this method, it was guaranteed the respondents would be from a wide geographic area.

6. The time required to collect the data typically is less than any other method (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993). Such a quantitative method gave the chance to use standardised measures that fit diverse various opinions and experiences into predetermined response categories. Patton (1988, p.9) reports “The advantage of the quantitative approach is that it measures the reactions of a great many people to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data”.

7. The factors of the questionnaire would be used in the third part of the study, using qualitative methods (interviews) and trying to investigate in depth the opinions of all stakeholders and examine the factors that contribute to effective schools.

On the other hand, the use of questionnaires had some disadvantages:

1. The use of a survey limits the ability of investigating the sample's answers in depth. The second part of the study was not to probe deeply into respondents' opinions about the factors of effective schools in Cypriot primary education but just to record and analyse them, acknowledging the limitations of such a method. Hayman (1968, p.66) discussing the issue of using a survey in a study reports, “The survey is often the only means through which opinions, attitudes, suggestions for improvement of instruction and other such data can be obtained. For the most part, however, the survey is not a good method for establishing cause and effect”.

2. There is the risk of misunderstanding a questionnaire's directions on how to complete it or the meaning of its statement. The use of a piloting team for the questionnaires minimised this disadvantage: “All data-gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instruments are clear and to enable you to remove any items which do not yield usable data” (Bell, 1993, p.84).

Hayman (1968) also reports this necessity of piloting:

“Pretesting, in fact, is absolutely essential to the preparation for any survey. No matter how experienced a researcher is, how well he understands his subject area, or how well he understands human nature, he can never be certain of the way people will react to a questionnaire or a survey schedule” (p.76).

The questionnaire was anonymous and all the stakeholders were asked not to state any information that might reveal their identity. Sax (1979, p.259) underlined the importance of the anonymity of respondents: “Not only is this a matter of professional ethics, but it is also of importance in obtaining valid responses, especially if the data are personal”.

Before distributing the questionnaires to schools, a letter was sent to the headteacher of each school that was chosen to take part in the research (see Appendix). The letter asked their permission to carry out the research in their school. After having the permission of the headteachers, the questionnaires were given to the sample. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected schools in early October 2001 and by the beginning of November they were collected.

The questionnaire consisted of six pages. The first page was the cover sheet, which explained the need for this research and its aims. The second to fifth page was the main part of the questionnaire and the sixth page referred to personal information of the participant. The questionnaire was created after examining the relevant literature about the levels of schooling (context, school, classroom, pupils), the characteristics of effective schools and effective teaching. In the questionnaire the stakeholders have to circle all statements showing how important each one of the characteristics was for an effective school according to their personal opinion and understanding.

The understanding that quantification and analysis of the results can be carried out more efficiently, and as it was not possible for all stakeholders to know the four levels of effective schools, I decided to use closed item, instead of open questions which ask for the

characteristics of effective schools. The closed questions permitted only certain responses, such as a multiple-choice question (see second page of the questionnaire) or marking on a specific scale (see p. 2-5 of the questionnaire). In addition, “The closed questions are easier and quicker to answer; they require no writing; and quantification is straightforward” (Oppenheim, 1993, p.43).

On the other hand, in the open questions the subject wrote the response in his/her own words based on his/her understanding of the questions, for instance e.g. "Why do you think...", "What is your opinion..." (See the end of both questionnaires). Borg (1981, p.85) highlighted and discussed the importance of having closed questions or statements instead of open questions “It is desirable to design the questions in closed form, so that quantification and analysis of the results may be carried out efficiently”.

The questionnaire covered the following four levels of SE:

1. Context Level: It covers actions that the responsible authority for Education (e.g. Ministry of Education and Culture) must take in order to make schools working places. There are twelve characteristics in this category.

2. School Level: It covers actions that the school (head, deputy-head, teachers, parents) must take in order to make schools able to promote pupils’ learning according to the directions in the Context Level. There are thirteen characteristics in this category.

3. Classroom Level: It covers actions that a teacher must take inside the classroom in order to promote pupils’ learning and progress in the best possible way. There are twenty characteristics in this category.

4. Pupils’ Level: It covers actions that the pupil must take in order to achieve progress according to the directions of his/her school, teachers, parents and peers. There are nine characteristics in this category.

By covering these four levels of schooling, the content validity of the questionnaire is ensured.

A seven-point Likert scale used for marking questionnaires' statements:

1 = Insignificant, 4 = Middle point, 7 = Very important. The Likert scale was used because as Gall et al. (1996, p.297) discussed "Likert scales, which typically ask for the extent of agreement with an attitude item are a common type of attitude scale". The scale was placed on the right of the statements.

At the beginning, the questionnaire consisted of 100 statements that showed those factors which contribute or do not contribute to an effective school. These factors were based on the examination of the relevant international literature on SE and TE in the previous chapters of the dissertation. In addition, these factors were chosen because they were close to Cypriot reality and reflected school life in Cyprus. Actually these characteristics were about fifty and the rest of the statements were negative statements of a factor in order to check the internal reliability of the questionnaire. For example statement 3.3 stated: "The teacher puts emphasis on the core knowledge" and statement 3.8 stated: "The teacher puts minimum emphasis on the core knowledge". In total, the teachers would have to mark about 100 statements. Knowing all the questions of the questionnaire, the approximate time to complete the whole questionnaire would be about forty-five minutes. This would be a shortcoming of the study and the response rate would be very low. So after piloting, the statements were reduced to fifty-four (for more information see p.85 "Piloting") by deleting the negative statements.

In addition, the questionnaire consisted of eight open-ended questions, which were focused on specific topics of the effective schools. The questions asked the participants:

1. To define the term "effective school" according to their understanding.

2. To report anything else they want about the effective school and the factors that contribute to effective schooling.
3. To report if their school has a development plan and if "Yes" to describe the development plan.
4. To report if their school needs a development plan and then to describe the kind of the development plan.
5. The participants to report their opinions about the IN-SET programmes and especially if they help teachers to develop their school.
6. To report their beliefs about their school.
7. To report anything else they want about their school.
8. To report anything else they want about the research.

The sixth page consisted of seven closed questions and the stakeholders have to mark the appropriate boxes. The questions ask about:

1. Teachers' questionnaire: gender, teaching experience, pedagogical education and years in the specific school.
2. Heads' and deputy-heads' questionnaire: gender, teaching experience, pedagogical education, years in the specific school, and years in the specific position.
3. Inspectors' questionnaire: gender, teaching experience, and pedagogical education, number of inspecting schools, and years in the specific position.
4. Pupils' questionnaire: gender, grade, the parents' profession, the class size and the teacher's gender.
5. Parents' questionnaire: gender, age, profession and the gender of the teacher of their child.

The Pupils' questionnaire consisted of four pages. The questionnaire did not have a cover, which explained the need for this research and its aims because the questionnaire was given directly by the researcher to the pupils and any necessary information about the aims of

the study was given orally. The first to third page, were the main part of the questionnaire. This part of the questionnaire was the same as the pages 2-5 of the teachers', heads', deputy-heads', inspectors', and parents' questionnaire. The only difference was the language used in some statements of the questionnaire, which was simpler, but at the same time, without changing the meaning of the questionnaire. The Pupils' questionnaire had only five open-ended questions because it would be very difficult (conceptual issues would occur) for pupils to express their beliefs and understanding about SI and IN-SET programmes:

1. To define the term "effective school" according to their understanding.
2. To report anything else they want about the effective school and the factors that contribute to effective schooling.
3. To report their beliefs about their school.
4. To report anything else they want about their school.
5. To report anything else they want about the research.

6.5.2. The Interviews:

Five teachers, five parents and seven pupils were interviewed. Those people were chosen because they had completed the last section of the questionnaire which asked them to report their name and telephone number in order to participate in the second part of the study (the interviews).

The interviews were used to gather the necessary data from the sample for the following advantages:

1. A qualitative method would allow an in-depth investigation of questionnaire results something that would not be possible with a quantitative method such as the use of questionnaires. As Wellington (2000, p.71) reported:

"But interviewing allows a researcher to investigate and prompt things that we cannot observe. We can probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices,

perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives. We can also elicit their version or their account of situations, which they have lived or taught through his-or her-story”.

2. Using the questionnaires’ results for discussion in the interviews was a strong advantage because the interviewee and the interviewer had specific issues to discuss. This would have been impossible if the interviews were used in the first or second part of the study. Because the interviewees would have to make judgments, express opinions and be discursive in a variety of factors that would be impossible to know or remember. This would make interviews very difficult for both the interviewer and the interviewee.
3. Using the questionnaires’ results for discussion, each respondent received the same set of questions phrased in exactly the same way.
4. The time required collecting the data was minimised because using the questionnaires’ results allowed to the researcher to use small samples from each sample category because specific issues were discussed. That gave the chance to use standardised measures that fit diverse various opinions and experiences into predetermined response categories.
5. The interviews were used for triangulation of the questionnaires’ results. This triangulation is known as “between method triangulation”. It means getting data on something with more than one method. As Delamont (1993, p.159) reported, triangulation is:

“A very powerful strategy for defending qualitative research against sceptics, because it makes sense to those used to experiments and surveys. Triangulation means having two or more 'fixed' or 'sightings' of a finding from different angles”.

On the other hand, the following disadvantages exist:

1. The time consumed, the cost, the difficulty in analysing responses and the subjectivity are very strong disadvantages of the interviews. But using a small sample (five teachers, five parents, seven pupils) from each sample category, it minimised the disadvantage of interviews such as the time consumed, the cost, and the difficulty in analysing responses and the subjectivity.

2. Only a small sample of each sample group was used due to the difficulty in analysing responses and the subjectivity. This did not allow any generalizability of interviews' findings.
3. By using an interview, each respondent may not receive the same set of questions phrased in exactly the same way and it is more difficult to yield comparable data. Using an interview schedule with specific questions, even though the interviewees in some cases were asked to answer any other questions that arose during the interview, minimised this disadvantage.
4. The interviews did not guarantee the respondents over a wide geographic area due to the time consuming factor.

All interviewees were asked a specific interview schedule with specific questions, even though the interviewees in some cases were asked to answer any other questions that arose during the interview (See "Appendix-the interview schedule") The topics of the interview schedule were chosen from questionnaires results and were focused on the specific topic of the factors that contribute to SE. The interviews, although relatively open-ended, covered particular topics and were guided by some general questions. The intention was the investigation of the factors that contribute to SE, which were revealed in the questionnaires, and at the same time the triangulation of questionnaires' results with those of the interviews. This triangulation is known as "between method triangulation". It means getting data on something with more than one method. The questionnaires' results allowed the researcher to use small samples from each sample category because specific issues were discussed. That gave the chance to use standardised measures that fit diverse various opinions and experiences into predetermined response categories. The interviews were structured in order to specify the issues of the discussion.

The interview schedule consisted of nine open questions, which focus on the specific topic of the characteristics of effective schools. Biklen (1992) supported the idea of structured interviews which focus on particular topics. The interviews schedule was structured

in order to specify the issues of the discussion. If the interviews were semi-structured, the interviewer may have less control over the interviewees who may discuss issues that were not within the scope of the survey. This characteristic of semi-structured interviews was also reported by Salisbury and Delamont (1995).

The stakeholders were asked to:

1. Define the term school effectiveness and/or effective school according to your understanding.
2. Discuss the random order of the characteristics of effective schools as those were identified by the various stakeholders in each of the four levels of schooling (context, school, classroom and pupil level).
3. Discuss why these characteristics were considered as the most important by the various stakeholders in each of the four levels of schooling (context, school, classroom and pupil level).
4. Say whether they have a development plan in their school.
5. Say whether they need a development plan in their school.
6. Express their opinions about IN-SET programmes and if the IN-SET programmes help teachers to improve and develop their school.
7. Express their belief about their school.
8. Report anything else they want about the research or SE.
9. Answer any other questions that arose after the analysis of the results of the questionnaire.

The issue of validity and reliability is a fundamental problem of all researchers. Kirk and Miller (1986, p.21) discussing this issue argue that the main question is “Whether the researcher sees what he or she thinks he or she sees”. With interviews’ triangulation, any questions which can affect the validity and reliability of the research, were minimised.

6.6. Research schedule/data collection

In Table 4, one can see the research schedule and data collection of the study.

Table 4. Research schedule and data collection

Date	Research activity
October 1999 to January 2000	Aim and research questions
February 2000 to October 2001	Reviewing International literature on SE and SI
January 2000 to January 2001	Preparing questionnaires and interview schedules
January 2001 to April 2001	Writing Proposal for upgrading M/Phil to Ph.D.
March 2001	Choose the sample
March 2001	Negotiating access to the samples
April 2001	Choose the pilot sample
April 2001	Negotiate access to the pilot sample
April 2001	Pilot the teachers' questionnaire
April 2001	Pilot the heads' and the deputy-heads' questionnaire
April 2001	Pilot the parents' questionnaire
April 2001	Pilot the inspectors' questionnaire
April 2001	Pilot the pupils' questionnaire
May 2001	Analysis of questionnaires' piloting
May 2001	Pilot the teachers' interview schedule
May 2001	Pilot the heads' and deputy-heads' interview schedule
May 2001	Pilot the parents' interview schedule
May 2001	Pilot the inspectors' interview schedule
June 2001	Upgrade committee from M/Phil to Ph.D.
June 2001	Analysis of interviews' piloting
July and August 2001	Make any necessary final changes in the questionnaires and the interview schedules
October 2001	Distribute questionnaire to teachers
October 2001	Distribute questionnaire to heads and deputy-heads
October 2001	Distribute questionnaire to parents
October 2001	Distribute questionnaire to inspectors
October 2001	Distribute questionnaire to pupils
November 2001-April 2002	Analysis of the questionnaires' results
May 2002	Plan interviews dates
June 2002	Interviews with pupils
June 2002	Interviews with teachers
June 2002	Interviews with heads and deputy-heads (not applicable)
July 2002	Interviews with inspectors (not applicable)
July 2002	Interviews with parents
August-November 2002	Analysis of interviews
November 2002-May 2003	Analysis of all data and writing up of thesis
July 2003	Plan submission date

6.7. Piloting

The questionnaires and the interview schedules were piloted. Piloting was necessary for the following reasons:

1. To check that instructions and statements are clearly stated.
2. To minimise the disadvantage of misunderstanding the directions on how to complete or answer the various parts of the questionnaire and the interview.
3. To test the length of time it takes to the various stakeholders to complete the questionnaire and answer the interview questions.
4. To carry out a preliminary analysis of the wording and format of the questions which may present some difficulties when the main data is analysed.

The need for a pilot study in order to determinate if the items are yielding the kind of information that is needed was also discussed by Bell (1993, p.84):

“The purpose of a pilot exercise is to get the bugs out of the instrument so that subjects in your main study will experience no difficulties in completing it and so that you can carry out a preliminary analysis to see whether the wording and format of questions will present any difficulties when the main data are analysed”.

The questionnaires and the interview schedules were piloted. The questionnaires were given to a pilot group of ten teachers, twelve parents, two heads, two deputy heads, one inspector and twenty-two pupils of the sixth grade. The pilot group was an opportunity sample. The teachers, the heads, the deputy heads and the inspector were serving in the area of Nicosia and I friendly ask them to participate into the piloting which gladly they done. The pupils were studying in the school that I was serving and the parents had also children studying in the same school. They were also friendly asked to participate into the piloting which gladly they done. The pilot group was interviewed and the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The statements should be reduced at least to fifty because they were too many and the sample would get tired and bored. Therefore, the risk of getting back limited answers to the

questionnaire was reduced. Eventually the questionnaire was reduced to fifty-four statements (for more information see “The questionnaires”, page 81). That ensures the “Advantage of questionnaires which is quick to fill and easy to follow up” (Walker, 1993, p.48).

2. Most of the statements were brief, written in single language and well understood but about five to six statements needed to be rewritten especially in the pupils’ questionnaire.
3. Some open-ended questions were not clear enough or their meaning could be misunderstood. So, those questions were rewritten.
4. The closed questions that asked about personal characteristics, on the sixth page of the questionnaire, were rewritten or changed so that they covered parents’ profession and age.
5. The negative statements that check the internal reliability of the questionnaire were not necessary because the statements were brief, written in single language and well understood.

6.8. Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis is an extremely important part of any research especially if it uses quantitative data such as questionnaires with Likert scales. The statistical analysis of the questionnaires was done using the SPSS program. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics used were those that most of the studies use:

1. Frequencies, showing the number of cases taking part in the research.
2. Percentages as the frequencies, showing the number of cases taking part in the research into a percentage form.
2. Mean, showing the mean-average value of a set of numbers.
3. Standard Deviation, showing the variation in a set of numbers.

Based on the type of data collected the following inferential statistics were most appropriate to be used:

1. Chi-Square, showing the association of two variables with each other.

2. T-test, showing the significant difference between the means of two independent or unrelated samples of scores.
3. ANOVA, showing the significance of the differences among several independent group means by partitioning the total variance in the independent variable into effects.
4. Correlation, showing the degree of linear relationship between two variables, negative or positive.
5. Factor Analysis, showing the correlations between complex sets of data (e.g. the factors of the questionnaire).
6. Size effect, showing the differences between two sample groups.

6.9. The sample

A very important issue for every researcher is to identify his/her sample. Identifying the sample means that the researcher has specified his/her aim and goals and also the methodology he/she is going to use. As Entwistle and Nisbet (1972, p.29) identified “The first stage in sampling is to define the population”. The overall sample was schools in the area of the capital city of Nicosia. The sample was divided into six sub-categories.

6.9.1. The sample of the schools: A number of eighteen primary schools in the urban area of Nicosia were chosen to be the overall sample. Six schools had from seven to twelve teachers; ten schools had thirteen to eighteen teachers and two had nineteen and over teachers. The schools were selected by stratified sampling (see Appendix “Sample selection”). As Scott and Usher (1999, p.70) discuss "The randomization principle allows the researcher to be certain that each member of a population has an equal chance of being selected".

I am aware of using hierarchical sampling and that may lead to underestimate standard errors but I have not used multilevel modeling because the small number of schools' sample will lead to unstable results at that level.

The identification of the target population of the research was considered as the first and most important part for the success of the survey. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993, p.346) identified "Unless the target population is defined in detail so that it is unequivocally clear as to who is, or is not, a member of it, any statements made about this population, based on a survey of a sample of it may be misleading or incorrect". The schools' sample was focused only on schools within the capital Nicosia (urban area) for the following assumptions:

1. The area of capital Nicosia is the largest educational area in the whole country with more than 25% of the total number of schools, teachers and pupils (Department of Statistics and Research, 2000-01) in Cyprus. Therefore, the results of this study could be generalized for all schools in the district of Nicosia.
2. Schools in rural areas have different characteristics (e.g., organizational, managerial, curriculum content) than schools in urban areas.
3. Most schools in rural areas are smaller (two-five teachers, ten-thirteen pupils) than schools in urban areas. This would have a different reflection on the research results. Even though this could be an interesting issue to investigate it was not a question that this research would like to answer at present time.
4. The samples (teachers, pupils and parents) would be very small due to the small size of schools in rural areas.
5. The culture of people living in rural areas is different than those living in urban areas and it would be very difficult to get feedback from them as far as the ongoing research. At the same time it was estimated that the return percentage (especially from parents) would be very low.

6.9.2. Teachers' sample: All the teachers of the selected schools were the sample of the research. The number of the sample was eight to twenty for every school. A total number of 273 questionnaires were given to the selected schools and all teachers were asked to participate. The questionnaires were answered and returned at the beginning of the school year 2001/02, from October to November 2001. From those questionnaires, 165 questionnaires were answered (60.43%), which is considered to be satisfactory and representative. This indicates that the use of an intermediary to each school had a positive impact on data gathering, even though a higher percentage was expected. The sample was within the limits allowed to be considered as representative for two reasons: (a) The choice of the sample was from the population of all teachers (Papanastasiou, 1990) and (b) The whole population of Cypriot primary teachers in Nicosia is around 1600 (Department of Statistics and Research 2000-01). The sample covered the ages between twenty-two to fifty years of age. The percentage of males and females was 24,4% and 75,6% respectively. This was expected because according to the statistical analysis of the Ministry of Education and Culture the percentage of male and female teachers in Cypriot Primary Education is about 31% and 69% respectively (Department of Statistics and Research 2000-01).

According to teachers' answers most of them have a University Degree (78,3%) and 20,5% have an MA in Education. 42,1% reported that they have one to two years service in the specific school; 26,2% three to four years; 18,9% five to six years and 11,6% seven to eight years.

Table 5, shows the teaching experience of the teachers' sample. Most teachers had teaching experience of six-ten years (44,7%). 59,3% of the sample was teachers with teaching experience from one to ten years, therefore the results and the analysis of this survey as far as teachers are concerned is based mainly on the opinions of young teachers in Cyprus primary education. This variable will be interesting to investigate.

Table 5. The teaching experience of the teachers' sample

Teaching experience in years N=165	n	%
1-5	24	14,9
6-10	72	44,7
11-15	49	30,4
16-20	8	5
21-25	3	1,9
26-...	5	3,1
Total	161	100

6.9.3. Parents' sample: It was decided to investigate the opinions of parents of the sixth grade in each sample school. The initial idea was to use the whole population of parents from each school but this was abandoned for the following reasons:

1. That would sum about 2,000 parents and would make the analysis extremely difficult.
2. The pupils were the intermediaries for the parents. The first to fourth year children (even the fifth year) would have difficulties giving and collecting the questionnaires back from their parents.
3. The sample of the pupils used in the research was only the sixth years of each school.
4. It will be interesting to correlate six-grade pupils and parents' data. It would be very interesting to see if the parents and their children have positive or negative correlations knowing that the majority of both samples belong to the same family.

The questionnaire was distributed only to one of the two parents. The total number of parents' sample was 338. The questionnaires were given to the parents at the beginning of school year 2001/02, October 2001 and were answered and returned by the end of November 2001. From those questionnaires, 166 questionnaires were answered (49.11%), which is considered to be satisfactory and representative. The low return percentage was an anticipated problem, especially from parents because it was not possible to have personal contact with them all. Their children were the intermediaries in each school and it was expected from them to give and collect the questionnaires. The sample was within the limits that allowed the collected

data to be considered as representative (Papanastasiou, 1990). The sample covered the ages from twenty to fifty-nine years of age. The percentage of males and females was 41,1% and 58,9% respectively. Someone might expected that the percentage would be about 50% for both genders. It was likely that more parents would be females because from my experience, and from my colleagues' experience, about 80% of parents who visit school to ask about their child's progress are women, showing that women are engaged in their children's education. More females answered the questionnaire for the following two reasons:

1. Due to the culture of Cypriots, most women and at the same time mothers, have a more strict timetable at work meaning that they leave their job at the exact time. On the other hand, men stay at work more hours than a woman with the same position. Women have more responsibilities in the house and for their children.
2. The men, and at the same time fathers, have less free time at home because when they finish their job they go home late. Knowing the culture of Cypriots, very few men will help their women in cooking or even with their children's studying. So, fathers would have less time to carry out actions concerning school and especially time to complete the questionnaire. At the same time it would be false to claim that fathers have less interest in schooling or the education of their children than mothers have. Their actions are guided by the belief that the "man of the house" must provide the family with all the necessary things that will ensure a happy and fulfilling life to their family.

Most parents are between thirty-one to forty years of age (58,5%) (see Table 6). A percentage of 35,4% is aged between forty-one to fifty years. This result was expected because it is common for the majority of people in Cyprus to get married between their mid twenties and early thirties. So, an eleven-year-old child (sixth grade) would have parents between middle thirties and early forties.

Table 6. The age of parents' sample

Parents' age N=166	n	%
20-30	4	2.40
31-40	96	58,5
41-50	58	35,4
51-60	4	2.40
61-...	2	1.20
Total	164	100

According to the Table 7 (Education of the sample) most of the parents are graduates of Secondary Education-Stage two/Lyceum or Vocational (45,4%). 28,2% of the sample reported that they have a University Degree; a percentage that was very high acknowledging that the University of Cyprus accepted its first students in 1992 and most students were obliged to study abroad. It was also very important to note the percentage of 4,3% that reports parents to be graduates from Primary Education, because only during the mid eighties (1985) secondary education (Stage one-Gymnasium) has been compulsory then the percentage can be considered as very low. These results prove something that was known: the Cyprus society has a high percentage of educated people. Even though all members of the society give emphasis to education and educational policy issues are a common debate among politicians in Cyprus, very few studies have been done about SE.

Table 7. The Education of the sample

Education N=166	n	%
Primary	7	4,2
Secondary-Stage one/Gymnasium	19	11,4
Secondary-Stage two/Lyceum or Vocational	74	45,4
University Degree	46	28,2
MA	12	7,4
Ph.D.	5	3,1
Total	163	100

In Table 8 we can see the profession of the parents. The professions were categorised in eight categories according to the description that the parents gave in the questionnaire. Factors such as the needs and expertise of the job, the education needed, the spiritual or handy job et cetera. was taken into account before the categorization. According to parents' reports most parents (27,6%) were working in jobs where university or higher education was needed such as banks, services (Department of Statistics and Research 2000-01, <http://www.pio.gov.cy>, university or higher education of Cyprus population' 22,3%). These percentages correlate positively with the percentage of 27.71% of parents that reported to have a University Degree. Also a significant percentage of 24,6% reported that they were working in jobs where specialisation was needed but only secondary education was necessary such as officers, workers, mechanics, plumbers et cetera. 18,7% reported that they were working in jobs where no specialisation was needed such as workers in building constructions, workers in factories et cetera. Finally, most parents reported that the teacher of their children was male (70,7%) and only 29,3% was female. Table 8, shows parents' profession.

Table 8. Parents' profession

Profession N=166	n	%
Specialized workers (builders, plumbers et cetera)	25	18,7
Office personnel (clerk, secretary et cetera)	33	24,6
Unspecialized workers (messenger, laborer et cetera)	18	13,4
Self-employed (has a small business e.g. shop)	0	0
House-keepers	9	6,7
Scientists (doctor, lawyer et cetera)	37	27,6
Teachers (school or college teachers)	8	6
Business man/woman (business director et cetera)	4	3
Total	134	100

6.9.4. Pupils' sample: The initial thought was to use the pupils of the fourth, fifth and sixth grade but that was abandoned for three reasons:

1. There would be a large amount of pupils and the whole analysis would be much more difficult.
2. The researcher would be forced to use a larger sample for parents because as it was reported earlier it would be interesting to correlate parents and pupils' answers knowing that the majority of both samples belong to the same family.
3. The young age of fourth and fifth graders would make the understanding of the questionnaire difficult for them and the answers given might not be valid and reliable.

For these reasons, it was decided to use only the pupils of the sixth grade of each school. In addition, it was decided to use only one class of each school (finally the total population of pupils was 183). The choice was random. As Slavin (1984, p.99) reported "Often it is more convenient to randomly sample clusters of individuals rather than individuals".

The questionnaires were given directly to the selected pupils at the beginning of the school year 2001/02, October 2001, by the researcher so that the classroom teacher would not have any part in the whole process. First, the researcher was giving information about the research to the pupils and then he was explaining the whole process to them. In order to be reliable and that the same explanations and directions were given to each classroom sample, they were written so that each time the researcher would say (actually read) the same things. Second, the researcher was reading the statements of the questionnaires to the pupils so that everything was clearly understood by them. At the same time the pupils were marking each statement according to their understanding and opinions. They were free to ask questions or ask for explanations about the statements. The percentage for the boys was 48,1% and for the girls 51,9%.

In Table 9 one can see the parents' profession. The professions were categorised in eight categories according to description that the pupils gave into the questionnaire and the same factors and categories as those in the parents' questionnaire were used.

According to pupils` reports most mothers (25,9%) were working in jobs where specialisation is needed but only secondary education is necessary such as officers, workers et cetera. A significant percentage of 22,9% reported that they were working in jobs where university or higher education is needed such as banks, services et cetera. A percentage of 15,9% reported that they were working in jobs where no specialisation is needed such as workers in factories et cetera.

Pupils` reported that most fathers (37,1%) were working in jobs where university or higher education is needed such as banks; services et cetera. 20% were working in jobs where no specialisation is needed such as workers in building constructions, workers in factories et cetera. Finally a high percentage of 18,8% reported that their father was working in jobs where specialisation was needed but only secondary education was necessary such as officers, workers et cetera. Table 9, shows parents` profession.

Table 9. Parents` profession

Professions N=183	Mother`s Profession		Father`s Profession	
	n	%	n	%
Specialized workers (builders, plumbers et cetera)	15	8,8	34	20
Office personnel (clerk, secretary et cetera)	44	25,9	9	5,3
Unspecialized workers (messenger, laborer et cetera)	27	15,9	32	18,8
Self-employed (has a small business, shop et cetera)	0	0	0	0
House-keepers	23	13,5	0	0
Personnel with higher qualifications (doctor, lawyer et cetera)	39	22,9	63	37,1
Teachers (school or college teachers)	18	10,6	9	5,3
Business man/woman (business director et cetera)	4	2,4	23	13,5
Total	170	100	170	100

According to pupils in upper grade classes (sixth grade) the majority of teachers are males (83%) and only a small minority were female (16,5%). Similar results were found in the parents` data. These percentages conflict with the teachers` sample where the

percentage of males and females was 24,4% and 75,6% respectively (see p. 100, point 7.7.2). According to the statistical numbers of the Ministry of Education and Culture the percentage of male and female teachers in Cypriot Primary Education was about 31% and 69% respectively. Why men preferred upper grade classes or why women did not prefer upper grade classes needs investigation.

6.9.5. Head-teachers' and deputy-heads' sample: The head-teachers and the deputy-heads of each of the schools were the sample of the research. The questionnaires were given directly to the selected sample at the beginning of school year 2001/02, October 2001 by the researcher. Forty-six questionnaires were given to the head and deputy heads of the selected schools but only fourteen (30.43%) answered the questionnaire, which cannot be considered to be satisfactory and representative. The low return percentage was not expected even though assumptions of a return percentage of about 70% of the sample were expected. The low return percentage of heads and deputy-heads was due to their very busy schedule (bureaucratic actions that have to do with schoolwork, correspondence with the Ministry of Education and Culture et cetera). The fact remains that due to the low return percentage I was not be able to make any inferential statistical analysis in the next chapter of the study because it would be unreliable and invalid. Only a description of the sample taking part in the research will be given.

The percentage of males and females was 64,3% and 35,7% respectively showing that male teachers have more opportunities to get a promotion and/or are more interested in having a career in a managerial position.

According to the sample 38,5% have teaching experience between 26-30 years, 38,5% between thirty-one to thirty-five years and 23% thirty-six years and more. 69,2% have a University Degree and 30,8% an MA in Education.

71,4% of the sample was serving in school with seven to twelve teachers; 21,4% in school with thirteen to eighteen teachers and 7,1% in school with nineteen and more teachers. This information is different from the selection of schools (see page 94, point 6.9.1). 64,3% have one to two years service in the specific school; 14,3% three to four years; 14,3% five to six years and 7,1% seven to eight years.

In addition, 33,3% has one-two years service in this position; 50% has three-four years; 8,3% five-six years and 8,3% has seven and more years service in this position.

6.9.6. Inspectors' sample: The inspectors of each of the schools were the sample of the research. The number of inspectors in the district of Nicosia was nineteen. Questionnaires were given only to the fifteen inspectors of General Subjects in Primary Education. The other four inspectors were not asked to participate in the research because they were inspecting specific subjects in Primary Education (P.E., Art, Music, Design and Technology). Of the fifteen inspectors only seven (46.66%) answered the questionnaire, which cannot be considered to be satisfactory and representative. The low return percentage was expected even though a higher percentage was expected. The low return percentage of inspectors was due to their very busy schedule and to the huge amount of bureaucratic actions that have to do with schoolwork, teachers' evaluation et cetera. Whatever the reason was, the fact that the inspectors' population in the district of Nicosia was very small it would be impossible to use any inferential statistical analysis. Therefore only descriptive statistics will be reported.

The questionnaires were given directly to the selected sample at the beginning of school year 2001/02, October 2001 by the researcher. The percentage of males and females was 85,7% and 14,3% respectively.

According to the Pedagogical Education of the sample most inspectors have an MA in Education (57,1%) and 42,9% a University Degree.

Four inspectors report that they have five-six years service in this position; two inspectors have three-four years and one inspector one-two years. According to the inspectors they all have teaching experience twenty-six years and more. One inspector reported that he/she inspects eleven to fourteen schools; three reported fifteen to nineteen schools and three twenty and more schools.

6.10. Summarising

In this Chapter the methodology of the research; the methods of data collection; the questionnaires and the interviews questions; issues like piloting; focus in Primary Education and Statistical Analysis, and a description of the sample groups of the study have been discussed.

CHAPTER 7. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

7.1. Introduction

In the next pages a discussion on the results of the data collected by the questionnaires will occur. The results of teachers', parents' and pupils' sample groups will be reported. Due to the fact that the headteachers, deputy-heads and inspectors samples were unsatisfactory, no reliable and valid statistical analysis was possible.

In each table one will be able to see the results of the three samples (in this way it will be possible to make comparisons of each samples' result) and the results of the questionnaire according to their random order that each statement and/or question had in the questionnaire.

7.2. Question A.1: Which school could be described as effective?

Asking people to describe an effective school is not an easy task due to the different knowledge, culture, beliefs, and understandings of each person. Which school could be considered as effective? Is it the school that achieves its aims? Which aims? The aims that were set by whom and why? What kind of aims must be achieved? Cognitive, psychological, behavioral or all kinds of aims? All those questions and many more must be answered in order to describe an effective school. Therefore, it is difficult to achieve a common definition of the term but it is not difficult to have a common understanding of the term.

The decision was to set this question (A.1) at the beginning of the questionnaire because in question A.2 the samples were asked to mark how important each factor was for an effective school according to their understanding. In this way they would answer question A.2 according to their understanding of the term "effective school". This does not ensure that all people of the sample answered first question A.1. This random order gave reliability and validity to the samples' answers because people, most likely, were marking each factor

according to their own understanding, and each time they were marking a statement in question A.2 they had in mind their definition of the term "effective school".

In researching SE knowledge one can find that there is no agreement on the definition of the term. This is a conceptual problem associated with SE movement. Looking into the various definitions one can identify that many of them are more a description of some aspects that could be recognised in an effective school (see also the discussion in Chapter 3). Moreover, the lack of agreement over what is described by the term effective school may have problems of construct validity. How can one be sure that people have a common understanding of what was defined as effective? Which school could be described as effective and for whom? How effective is the school? These issues arise from the moment that the researcher looking for SE fails to provide a clear and understandable definition of the term. In a research such as this where people were asked to provide their understanding of the term and then to describe all those factors they considered as important for an effective school, a common understanding of the term was essential. Knowing all those misunderstandings that may take place in this research and any other similar research, the methodology of the research should provide all those safety guidelines that may lead to safe, reliable and valid results. That is why the definition of the term effective school was considered as a major issue and special attention was given. The following steps were taken to ensure that the results would be considered as reliable and valid:

1. The people who took part in the first part of the research (gathering data by questionnaires) were asked to give their definition of an effective school and then to complete the other parts of the questionnaire. In this way, each time they would mark a statement of the questionnaire they would have in mind their own understanding of the term.

2. All the definitions of each sample group were analysed. The analysis tried to find the common identifications of each sample group in a way that a common definition could be produced. A definition that would represent the majority of the understanding of each sample group.
3. A common definition of each sample group was produced. Actually common factors were recognised for every sample group.
4. The people who took part in the second part of the research (interviews) were asked to study the common definition that was produced.
5. Then they were asked to discuss the definition and/or make any comment they wanted and/or to give their own definition.
6. Finally, the interviewees were asked to give their own definition of the effective school if that was different from the one they were asked to discuss in the previous point. In this way, they would answer and discuss the questions of the interview according to their own understanding of the term.

Defining a term that people may interpret under their understanding is an ambiguity that any research would not want. The methodology used and the carefully organised steps minimise the danger of ambiguity.

In the following pages some of the most common definitions that teachers, parents and pupils gave will be reported. All the definitions of each sample group were analysed. The analysis tried to find the common identifications of each sample group. Various definitions were chosen because were reported by many people (not the majority of the people) and similar themes representing the opinions of a group of people were identified. In a way one could say that each definition represents a group of people with similar opinions, beliefs and understanding.

7.2.1. Teachers definitions of an "effective school":

Teachers like all professionals, are experts in their work and they are among the most appropriate people to report which school could be described as effective. In the following pages some of the most common definitions that teachers gave will be reported. The first definition talks about the opportunities that a school should give to all its pupils:

"An effective school gives opportunities to all pupils to develop their skills. At the same time it develops pupils personality by succeeding both cognitive and psychological aims."

According to the above definition an effective school should give opportunities to all pupils to develop their skills and personality at both cognitive and psychological level. These elements could describe the definition as humanistic, and at the same time, realistic. It is a definition that could be found in every educational system. The issue is that one must be able to make judgments about equal opportunities, skills, and cognitive and psychological goals through an evaluation system. Because how can one know if the achieved aims have reached the expected level? No empirical evidence is enough to ensure any kind of effectiveness.

The next definition encompasses the issue of pupils' "value added". In addition it covers both cognitive and psychological aims.

"An effective school develops pupils in the best possible way in three areas (achievements, behaviors and personality) in comparison to the level that they were in the previous school year."

One can see that it has common characteristics with the previous definition but reports a new issue. The issue of association between what was previously achieved (pupil's achievements in previous school year) and what was achieved in the current school year. This identification puts pressure on the role of teachers and school leading to discussions about schools' and teachers' accountability to parents, pupils, governors and the society. Another important issue of the definition is the identification that pupils' progress must be "in the best possible way"

meaning that the value added of each pupil must be investigated. The next two definitions have similar characteristics with the previous one, underlying the value of specific results on which we can judge effectiveness:

"In an effective school every pupil presents satisfactory development and improvement in comparison to his/her achievements and behavior in the previous school year. The development and improvement of each pupil will develop and improve his/her classroom and the classrooms will develop and improve the school. It must be understood that the teachers of the school must co-operate and choose the appropriate methods, approaches and means that must use in their classroom to achieve their aims".

According to the definition, the teacher identified three characteristics:

1. Every pupil must present satisfactory development and improvement in comparison to his/her achievements and behavior in the previous school year.
2. The development and improvement is seen as a wave: the development and improvement of each pupil will develop and improve his/her classroom and the classrooms will develop and improve the school.
3. The teachers must co-operate and choose the appropriate methods, approaches and resources that will all use in their classroom to achieve their aims.

The last characteristic the teacher reported emphasises the issue of co-operation between teachers and choosing the appropriate methods and resources that will use in their classroom, which is a factor that contributes to an effective school. It is obvious that without these characteristics no result could be achieved at the most potential level.

The following definition has the same philosophy but it adds the issue of evaluation:

"An effective school's educational scope and aims (cognitive and skills) and pedagogy (attitudes and behavior) are achieved according to the results of the evaluation."

Evaluation is synonymous with teaching and learning. Evaluation is important not only for making judgments about each pupil's abilities and development but more to make judgments

about how appropriate each method was and approach used by the teacher in the classroom. Each evaluation must be used as an instrument for teacher, classroom and school improvement. Judgments must be made about what and how one must evaluate. Although the educational system of Cyprus is very centralised and conservative, no national standards policy is applied, so no judgments about each schools' development and improvement in correlation to other schools or within the school could be made. The next definition reports the issue of evaluation according to the aims of the governors, the issue of the positive atmosphere both for teachers and pupils and the issue of teachers-pupils cooperation:

"A school is effective if it achieves the aims of the Ministry of Education and the pupils feel satisfied about their experiences in the environment of the school and their progress. At the same time the teachers feel satisfied about their efforts and relations with their pupils".

Finally, the last definition reports the issue of achieving school's aims. It adds the issue of heads, teachers and pupils cooperation; teachers ability to use all available resources:

"An effective school achieves its common aims through the cooperation of the headteacher, the teachers and the pupils. In addition it uses all the available resources and equipment to develop its pupils personality".

7.2.2. Teachers most common factors of an "effective school":

Studying the definitions of question A.1 one can recognise three guidelines on which teachers based their definitions. The teachers describe as effective a school that:

1. Achieves not only cognitive but also psychological and behavioral goals.
2. All pupils have the opportunities to achieve their best and to develop their personality.
3. Cooperation of the headteacher, the teachers and the pupils exist.

7.2.3. Parents' definitions of an "effective school":

Parents, even though they are not experts to define which school should be recognised as effective, they have their own understanding of the term due to their everyday contact with

the school and teachers. In the following pages some of the most common definitions that parents gave will be reported.

Discussing the term “effective school” implies that the focus of the definition should be placed in schooling and issues that cover any taken actions within it. It is expected that teachers play a very important role in this definition according to parents understanding.

"A school could be effective if the teachers provide equal opportunities to all their pupils and at the same time offer knowledge, spiritual development and elements that support to the construction of pupils personality, self esteem, psychology and self confidence."

The above definition gives emphasis on the role of teachers to provide equal opportunities to all pupils to develop their personality. This belief is supported by a humanistic definition, which places pupil in the center of the school and its environment:

"A school is effective when it provides the necessary help, encouragement to all the pupils to develop their own abilities, to benefit from the school's knowledge to the maximum level."

The above definition implies that all actions should be taken acknowledging pupils needs and abilities. At the same time, pupils should be benefit to the maximum from their attendance in school. It looks to be a simple and realistic definition but many issues occur about pupils' opportunities and how this is achieved, school policy issues, curriculum content, assessment methods et cetera. Although everybody may agree that the education should be child-centered many issues must be discussed.

The following definition supports the previous identifications and adds the role of headteacher and the resources of the school.

"An effective school has well educated teachers that practice their profession as good as it is possible achieving their best and it has an effective headteacher and good resources."

The role of the curriculum is an issue that parents recognise and give much attention:

"An effective school covers efficiently the curriculum without pressure to the pupils and at the same time the contents of the curriculum is understood by the pupils."

The main characteristic of the above definition is the curriculum consumption, which should be understood by all pupils, without any pressure. How it is possible for all pupils to cover and understand the curriculum at the same level, without any reasonable pressure from the teacher, peers, school and parents? Even though that sounds democratic and with respect to the unique development of every child/person one can argue that the differences of every child make for different understandings of the various subjects of the curriculum. This definition encompasses the strong feeling of parents that their child should feel happy at the school and enjoy every minute of school life. At the same time they should learn according to their own abilities based on the curriculum. All those could be seen as a realistic, humanistic, child-centered approach of schoolwork. The main issue here is how can one make judgments about the effectiveness of the curriculum without evaluation and if the development and improvement of every child (value added) is according to their abilities.

The next two definitions cover the expectations of parents; they are realistic and focus their emphasis on schooling. They are very close in their meaning. The first definition, although it does not report anything about aims and assessment, reports that:

"An effective school at the end of the school year has high percentage of success. The pupils that finish school have results above average. It is very important to have the right management and co-operation between the teachers to succeed those".

The definition recognises the importance of measurement in order to make judgments about the effectiveness of the schools. It reports a school as effective that two preconditions should be satisfied: 1. School's results at the end of school year have high level of success and 2. The pupils that finish the school have results above average. On the other hand, it does not specify or explain the understanding of the phrases "high level of success" and "above average". These phrases mean that the results of the school should be above the average accepted level

of success (within SE) and at the same time will add value to the pupils more than the average point of all schools (between SE).

The following definition has the same characteristics as the previous one. The advantage is that it uses specific criteria that can help us to recognise the effective school:

"In an effective school the majority of the pupils (more than 90%) have achievements at least 75% of the scale. At the same time pupils demonstrate good behavior and high level of self-discipline."

Studying the definition one can recognise three guidelines: (a) The results of the pupils should judge the school's level of effectiveness and specific targets should guide the whole process. (b) The majority of pupils (more than 90%) must be able to show progress above the average (75%). (c) The results are also based on psychological measurements. The value-added concept is introduced in this definition emphasizing the need for specific results. The parents again accept the child-centered approach and at the same time they respect pupil's cognitive and psychological needs.

7.2.4. Parents' most common factors of an "effective school":

Studying the definitions one can identify that they are child-centered and based on the following guidelines:

1. All pupils have equal opportunities to achieve cognitive, psychological and behavioral goals, which lead to the construction of their personality and spiritual development.
2. Effective headship and co-operation with the teachers.
3. The teachers are well educated and practice their profession in the best possible way.
4. The curriculum consumption is satisfactory and effective.
5. Pupils progress and development must be judged through specific results.

7.2.5. Pupils' definitions of an "effective school":

It is most likely that pupils stay in school more hours than they stay with their parents. In school they have more time to communicate and socialise with peers and teachers than they have with their parents and the other members of the family. When one spends time in a place he/she wants to spend the time effectively and to achieve the highest results according to their abilities. Asking children to discuss which school they consider as effective, although it seems to be difficult, at the same time it is extremely important and essential because if the children recognise a place as ineffective then their attitude at school won't be positive which will lead to low achievements.

In studying pupils' definitions one can see that the majority of them are simple and descriptive. It is known that children tend to describe things than to discuss them. They described what they considered to be effective in simple words, expressing their feelings and thoughts. It is difficult for children to give definitions for things they know or understand and extremely difficult to define intangible terms. In the next lines some of the most common definitions that pupils gave will be reported.

The first definition underlines the need for cooperation between the two most important elements of schooling; teachers and pupils. It is expected from them to express these ideas because pupils feel safe and confident if everybody supports them; they need to see things and actions that promote cooperation.

"The school where all the teachers have all the necessary means to teach pupils. All pupils should co-operate with their teachers."

This pupil recognises two factors that can play an important role in SE: the need for co-operation between teachers-pupils and for the school to have all the necessary resources. Learning is taking place in classrooms. Without the co-operation between the teachers and pupils it will not be possible to achieve learning to the maximum level. Pupils recognise the

availability of all the necessary resources because they are engaged in the everyday schoolwork.

As it was previously recognised, the teachers are one of the most important factors of school. Moreover the teachers' role is important if they are well educated and dedicated to their work.

"A school is effective if it has well-educated teachers, an interesting environment. In addition the teachers help all pupils without any form of discrimination".

This pupil identified the need to have well educated teachers, which is the most important precondition for SE. The education of teachers has to do more with the philosophy and the syllabus of the University where someone studies. But one cannot make judgments about this kind of issues without any data to compare between the graduates of the various Universities. For example, one can make judgments about the education of student teachers in the University of Cyprus and in the Universities in the UK or the USA. But at the end the teachers will have to teach according to the curriculum and the philosophy of the state, the school that they work in.

The pupil identifies that an interesting environment for pupils supports learning and pupils' motivations. A rich and interesting environment for pupils was one of the characteristics of effective schools (Mortimore et al., 1988, et cetera.). Finally, the last factor that was identified, "teachers support all pupils without any form of discrimination", motivates and supports pupils' learning feeling safe and sure about themselves strengthening their self-concept and developing their self-esteem.

The following definition gives attention not only to the role of teachers but also to the role of all responsible parties:

"I believe that a school is effective if the teachers co-operate with the headteacher and the parents. The pupils behave well at school and co-operate with each other."

The pupil gives much importance to the personal relations between the teachers-headteacher, teachers-parents, teachers-pupils and pupils-pupils. The personal relations play an important role and it is a common identification among the above three definitions. Especially in Cyprus where personal relations and friendship play a very important role in everyday life, the co-operation within and between the various stakeholders is essential because in this way it is possible to solve all the everyday problems that arise. In addition to these recognitions, the identification of the following pupil who reports the need of every pupil to feel safe and that has to do with the atmosphere of the school is very important:

"In an effective school pupils feel safe and cooperate with their teachers. In addition they have (the pupils) a positive attitude to school."

According to this definition the school is effective if the pupils feel safe and cooperate with their teacher(s). The recognition that pupils must have a positive attitude to school is very important because no one can learn if he/she: does not want to learn; does not have a positive belief that he/she can learn, and can achieve his/her best.

7.2.6. Pupils' most common factors of an "effective school":

Most definitions include the following common factors which describe an effective school:

1. Good relations and co-operation between the headteacher, teachers, pupils and parents.
2. Pupils have the opportunity and help to develop their abilities.
3. The teachers are well educated; dedicated to their job and have the necessary resources.
4. Pupils have a positive attitude and behavior at school.
5. The environment and the atmosphere of the school are positive for pupils.

7.3. Question A.2: How much important is each factor for SE?

In this section the results of question A.2 where the sample groups marked how important each factor was for an effective school will be reported. According to the results (see Table 10) most factors were marked with a higher mean than the middle point (M=4-4,49) of the seven-point Likert. Only three statements in pupils' questionnaires were marked with a lower mean. Therefore, one can conclude that all factors are important for SE. Most factors were marked with a mean between 5,5-6,49.

In the teachers' questionnaire 28 factors (51,85%) were marked with a mean between 5,5-5,99 and 19 factors (37,25%) were marked with a mean between 6-6,49. In the parents' questionnaire 13 factors (24,07%) were marked with a mean between 5,5-5,99 and 29 factors (53,70%) with a mean between 6-6,49. Finally, in the pupils' questionnaire 11 factors (20,37%) were marked with a mean between 5,5-5,99 and 28 factors (51,85%) with a mean between 6-6,49. These results imply that all factors are important in order to have SE. This implies that each factor must be activated in certain periods of school life, at the appropriate level, at the right time, at a certain level, in an appropriate domination to others. Table 10, shows the dispersion of all means according to the Questionnaire.

Table 10. Dispersion of all means according to Questionnaire

Factors marked with Mean between	Number of factors in each sample group N=54					
	Teachers		Parents		Pupils	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
6.5-7	1	1,85	8	14,81	9	16,66
6-6.49	19	37,25	29	53,70	28	51,85
5.5-5.99	28	51,85	13	24,07	11	20,37
5-5.49	6	11,11	2	3,70	2	3,70
4.5-4.99	0	0	2	3,70	1	1,85
4-4.49	0	0	0	0	2	3,70
3.5-3.99	0	0	0	0	1	1,85
TOTAL	54	100	54	100	54	100

The reliability test for the questionnaire showed that the statements used were reliable. Table 11 shows the Alpha values of each one of the four levels of the questionnaire for the three sample groups. All variables show strong reliability except for Context Level for the teachers and the pupils’ questionnaire, which shows reliability around 0,6. Furthermore all variables of each one of the four levels of the questionnaire and for the three sample groups have values around the α value of the level they belong to.

Table 11. The Alpha values of each one of the four levels of the questionnaire

	Teachers'	Parents'	Pupils'
Level of the Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Questionnaire
Context Level: 12 variables	$\alpha=0,63$	$\alpha=0,78$	$\alpha=0,63$
School Level: 13 variables	$\alpha=0,87$	$\alpha=0,86$	$\alpha=0,71$
Classroom Level: 20 variables	$\alpha=0,95$	$\alpha=0,88$	$\alpha=0,76$
Pupils Level: 9 variables	$\alpha=0,92$	$\alpha=0,84$	$\alpha=0,69$

7.3.1. Factor analysis:

The questionnaire was subjected to factor analysis. Factor analysis is a technique which aims to simplify complex sets of data by analysing the correlations between them. The correlation between each of the variables can be calculated and yields a correlation matrix. “Factor analysis is designed to simplify the correlation matrix and reveal a small number of factors which can explain the correlations. A component or a factor explains the variance in the intercorelation matrix, and the amount of variance explained is known as the eigenvalue for the factor” (Foster, 1999, p.207).

Each level of the questionnaire was subjected to principal components analysis. If the principal components analysis revealed the presence of more than two or three components with eigenvalues exceeding 1 and no strong loading were revealed for the

variables then a decision was taken to retain two or three factors for further investigation. In addition it was decided to run the analysis with rotation of factors using the Oblimin method and actually to aid the interpretation of these (two or three) components Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization rotation were performed. It was decided to use the Oblimin method because it gives an oblique rotation with a better simple structure. According to Kline (1994, p.76) “If an oblique rotation gives a better simple structure then the Direct Oblimin package is the one to use”. On the other hand the Varimax method gives an orthogonal simple structure rotation.

In most of the cases, a number of strong loading was revealed. The tables of all factor analysis for each Level of the questionnaire for the three sample groups can be found in the Appendix under the title “Factor Analysis”. In the following pages a brief report and discussion of the factor analysis for each level of the questionnaire is found after the presentation and questionnaires’ factors.

7.4. The importance of each factor in the four levels

Tables 12, 13, 14 and 15 show the importance of each factor of the four levels of question A.2 for every sample group. In other words, one can recognise the marking of each Level. In each table there are three columns. The first column shows the factors according to the order they had in the questionnaire; the second column shows the Mean (M) and the third the Standard Deviation (SD). The fact that the tables show the results of each sample group (teachers, parents and pupils) it is extremely interesting because in this way it is easier to make comparisons for the factors of each Level that each sample group had identified.

In each table I will discuss only the two most important and the two least important factors because it will not be possible to discuss all the factors because each level encompassed twelve to twenty characteristics, which made the discussion and analysis extremely difficult, even though such a discussion would be very interesting. Therefore, I

believe that the discussion should be limited to the two most important and two least important factors, which will also give the opportunity to the interviewees to discuss these findings in depth.

7.4.1. Context Level-the two most important factors:

Table 12, shows the Context Level and how important each factors is.

Table 12. Context Level. How important is each statement?

Question A.2. Context Level	Teachers' Questionnaire N=165		Parents' Questionnaire N=166		Pupils' Questionnaire N=182	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1.1. The quality of the curriculum	5,85	1,02	6,07	1,19	6,06	1,51
1.2. The financial support/per pupil expenditure	5,96	,90	4,90	1,65	5,62	1,57
1.3. The educational policy of the state	6,01	,96	5,84	1,42	6,11	1,35
1.4. The inspectors' support on everyday school work	5,34	1,41	5,07	1,51	4,19	1,99
1.5. The school size	6,00	1,11	5,82	1,42	3,79	2,21
1.6. Parents' positive involvement	5,75	1,09	5,82	1,41	5,66	1,70
1.7. Parents' support and assistance to their children's progress	6,14	1,07	6,06	1,22	6,14	1,43
1.8. The use of In-Service Training Programs	5,90	1,19	6,00	1,36	5,31	1,74
1.9. The formation of National standards in Primary Education	5,37	,93	5,30	1,53	5,81	1,65
1.10. The building maintenance and the resources of the school	6,08	,89	6,10	1,18	6,23	1,32
1.11. The quality of the textbooks	6,34	,81	6,50	,99	6,38	1,00
1.12. The teachers' evaluation system	5,32	1,45	6,02	1,38	5,64	1,55

The teachers' sample reported as most important the factors "Parents' support and assistance to their children's progress" ($M=6,14$, $SD=1,07$) and "The quality of the textbooks" ($M=6,34$, $SD=0,81$). On the other hand, both parents' and pupils' sample reported as most important the factors "The building maintenance and the resources of the school" ($M=6,10$, $SD=1,18$; $M=6,23$, $SD=1,32$) and "The quality of the textbooks" ($M=6,50$, $SD=0,99$; $M=6,38$, $SD=1,0$) showing that both samples have similar opinions in these issues. All sample groups recognised the factor "The quality of the textbooks".

The three sample groups identified factor "The quality of the textbooks" as one of the most important factors for effective schooling in this level. Their agreement is also supported by the one-way ANOVA test which showed that there was no significant difference among the three means, $F(2, 505)=1,26$, $p<,28$. This recognition must be investigated in depth for two reasons:

1. Why does each sample group believe that the "quality of the textbooks" is the most important factor of the Context Level for SE?
2. The three sample groups recognised this factor for the same reasons or not, and if not then why?

The following assumptions give answers to the above questions:

1. Teachers feel secure, they feel that their work is well-supported. They feel that the curriculum is delivered in the best way, at the right time and to the appropriate amount due to the quality of textbooks. If these assumptions are true then do teachers feel incompetent to teach without a textbook? Do they want their actions to be specific and according to a framework?
2. The parents feel secure that whoever the teacher of their child is, hard worker or not, will deliver the appropriate amount of the curriculum due to the quality of textbooks. If these assumptions are true do parents feel safer about the teaching procedure and learning outcomes

of their children when the textbooks are recognised as qualitative without worrying about the "quality of teaching"?

3. The pupils feel secure for the same reason as their parents that whoever their teacher is will deliver the appropriate amount of the curriculum due to the quality of textbooks.

The t-test for the gender and the statement "Parents' support and assistance to their children's progress" for teachers sample shows significant difference ($t(156)=4,09$, $p<,001$) between women and men. The effect size was $D=0,22$. Men teachers gave a higher mean about the importance of parents' support and assistance to their children's progress. No other significant difference was recognised using the t-test either for the statements or the other sample groups.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor "Parents' support and assistance to their children's progress" ($F(5, 153)=6,21$, $p<,001$) and the teaching experience of teachers' sample showed that there was some significant difference. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience one to five years and the groups with experience between eleven to fifteen and sixteen to twenty years. The younger teachers gave less importance to this factor ($M=5,79$, $SD=1,10$) than the other two samples which marked this factor with a higher mean ($M=6,69$, $SD=,66$; $M=7$, $SD=,0$). The one-way ANOVA test for factor "The quality of the textbooks" ($F(5, 155)=3,15$, $p<,01$) and the education of parents' sample showed that there was some significant difference. Again using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the parents sample group with Secondary education (Stage one-Gymnasium) and the group with Secondary education (Stage two-Lyceum) and Higher education (University degree). The parents' sample with lower Education gave lower importance to this factor ($M=5,84$, $SD=1,21$) than the other two sample which marked this factor with a higher mean ($M=6,58$, $SD=,93$; $M=6,72$, $SD=,50$).

7.4.2. Context Level-the two factors with the lowest mean:

The teachers' sample marked the factors "The inspectors' support on everyday school work" ($M=5,34$, $SD=1,41$) and "The teachers' evaluation system" ($M=5,32$ $SD=1,45$) with the lowest mean (see Table 12). The parents' sample reported the factors "The financial support/per pupil expenditure" ($M=4,90$, $SD=1,65$) and "The inspectors' support on everyday school work" ($M=5,07$, $SD=1,51$). The pupils' sample marked the factors "The inspectors' support on everyday school work" ($M=4,19$, $SD=1,99$) and "The school size" ($M=3,79$, $SD=2,21$) with the lowest mean. The three sample groups marked factor "The inspectors' support on everyday schoolwork" as one of the factors with the minimum importance at this level. The one-way ANOVA test for factor "The inspectors' support on everyday school work" ($F(2, 502)=22,57$, $p<,001$) showed that there was some significant difference among the three means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the pupils sample group and the other two groups (teachers and parents) meaning that pupils have different opinions in this issue but not teachers with parents.

Three samples marked the factor "The inspectors' support on everyday school work" as one with the minimum importance because according to the teachers' evaluation system the inspectors' role was more about evaluating teachers' performance than supporting teachers on everyday schoolwork. Although the teachers' evaluation system describes as one of the inspectors' actions the support in teachers' schoolwork, in practice the only role that inspectors apply is that of the evaluator. How one can be evaluator and supporter at the same time?

The one-way ANOVA test for factor "The inspectors' support on everyday school work" ($F(5, 154)=3,60$, $p<,01$) and teachers experience showed that there was some significant difference among the means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD)

showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience eleven to fifteen and the group with experience one to five and six to ten years. The group with eleven to fifteen years of experience was less positive to this factor.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor “The teachers’ evaluation system” ($F(5, 154)=4,48, p<,001$) and teachers experience showed that there was some significant difference among the means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience sixteen to twenty years and the one to five years group. The sixteen to twenty was more positive to this factor.

The t-test for parents’ gender and the statement “The inspectors’ support on everyday school work” shows significant difference ($t(158)=-2,59, p<,01$) between women and men. The effect size was $D=0,41$. Women were more positive in their views. No other significant difference was recognised either for the statements or the other samples.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor “The inspectors’ support on everyday school work” ($F(5, 154)=3,54, p<,01$) and parents’ education showed that there was some significant difference among the six means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the parents sample group with education Primary Education and the group with Secondary Education (Stage one-Gymnasium), University, and PhD. The first group was more positive than the other groups.

7.4.3. Context Level- Factor Analysis:

The 12 items of the Context Level were subjected to factor analysis. The factor analysis for teachers’ sample showed that the 12 items could be explained by five factors. Three variables (1.4, 1.8 and 1.12) were strongly loading to the first factor. The common factor was the role of the inspector to support and develop his/her teachers according to his/her responsibilities.

Two variables (1.1 and 1.9) were strongly loading to the second factor showing that the common factor was the quality of the curriculum and how effective it is. Three variables (1.2, 1.3 and 1.7) were strongly loading to the third factor. Their common factor was state and parents' support to pupils. The two variables (1.6 and 1.11) were strongly loading to the fourth factor. The common factor was the quality of textbooks and how these enable parents to support their pupils. Finally, one variable (1.5) was strongly loading to the fifth factor. Variable 1.10 did not strongly load to either factor. The two variables with the lowest mean (1.12, $r=.7$ and 1.4, $r=.6$) could be explained by the same factor. The common factor was the role of the inspector in teachers' everyday work. Due to the Cypriot teachers' evaluation system there is a controversy in inspectors' duties where at the same time he/she is an evaluator and pastoral.

The factor analysis for parents' sample showed that the 12 items could be explained by four factors. Five variables (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.10 and 1.11) were strongly loading to the first factor. The common factor was the policy of the state and how this allows any support actions to take place. Two variables (1.6 and 1.7) were strongly loading to the second factor showing that the common factor was parents' involvement and support to their children. Two variables (1.8 and 1.12) were strongly loading to the third factor. Their common factor was the role of the inspector to support and develop his/her teachers according to his/her responsibilities. Finally, one variable (1.4) was strongly loading to the fourth factor. Variables 1.12 and 1.8 did not strongly load to either factor.

The factor analysis for pupils' sample showed that the 12 items could be explained by three factors. Two variables (1.10 and 1.12) were strongly loading to the first factor. The common factor was the support that the resources of the school offer to teachers' everyday work. Two variables (1.2 and 1.4) were strongly loading to the second factor showing that the common factor was inspectors' support on the way that the resources of the school are

allocated. Two variables (1.6 and 1.7) were strongly loading to the third factor. The common factor was parents' involvement and support to their children. Variables 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.8, 1.9 and 1.11 did not strongly load to either factor.

7.4.4. Context Level-Correlations:

The factors were subjected to correlation analysis. The analysis showed that they were modest correlations between the factors of the Context Level for the three sample groups.

The teachers sample group showed modest correlations between the twelve factors of the Context Level. For example, factors “The financial support/per pupil expenditure” and “The educational policy of the state” were weakly correlated ($r=.387$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that the financial support to schools does not determinate the educational policy of the state and there are things more important than money to support pupils learning. Another example were factors “The formation of National standards in Primary Education” and “The teachers' evaluation system” which weakly correlated ($r=.385$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that the formation of National standards in Primary Education will not change the way that teachers are evaluated.

The parents sample group showed modest and some strong correlations between the twelve factors of the Context Level. For example, factors “Parents' positive involvement” and “Parents' support and assistance to their children's progress” were strongly correlated ($r=.619$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that from the moment that parents support and assist their children this will be a positive involvement.. In addition, the factors “The quality of the curriculum” and “The quality of the textbooks” gave modest correlation ($r=.410$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that people and especially teachers are more important than the curriculum and textbooks.

The pupils sample group showed low correlations between the twelve factors of the Context Level. For example, factors “The educational policy of the state” and “The building maintenance and the resources of the school” were weakly correlated ($r=.316$, $p<.001$). May be this is due to the belief the building maintenance and the resources of the school are also the responsibility of the Local Educational Authorities and the Parents Union. Another example were factors “Parents’ positive involvement” and “Parents’ support and assistance to their children’s progress” which were weakly correlated ($r=.262$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief of pupils that more of their progress is due to their own effort than to the positive involvement, support and assistance of their parents.

7.4.5. School Level-the two most important factors:

Table 13 shows the factors of the School Level for each sample group. People are very positive in their views and marked all statements with a high mean because they seem to emphasise the importance of the factors of the school level for SE. The teachers’ sample reported as most important the factors “A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils” ($M=6.45$, $SD=0.73$) and “A safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers” ($M=6.52$ $SD=0.75$). On the other hand, the parents’ and pupils’ sample reported as most important the factors “Leader and teacher co-operation” ($M=6.53$, $SD=0.90$; $M=6.59$, $SD=0.92$) and “A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils” ($M=6.58$, $SD=0.88$; $M=6.49$, $SD=1.21$) showing that both samples have same opinions on these factors. The three sample groups marked factor “A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils” as one of the most important factors. This identification was also supported by the one-way ANOVA test which showed that there was no significant difference among the three means, $F(2, 506)=0.74$, $p<.47$.

Table 13, shows the School Level and how important each statement is.

Table 13. School Level. How important is each statement?

Question A.2. School Level	Teachers' Questionnaire N=165		Parents' Questionnaire N=166		Pupils' Questionnaire N=182	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
2.1. Strongly educational leadership	5,82	1,27	6,25	1,32	6,13	1,40
2.2. Leader and teacher co-operation	6,44	,81	6,53	,90	6,59	,92
2.3. Teachers' feedback and reinforcement by the leader	6,08	1,02	5,85	1,21	6,04	1,27
2.4. Teachers' participation in decision-making	6,28	,83	5,98	1,12	6,42	1,20
2.5. A Clear and common vision by the leader and the staff	6,15	,89	6,26	1,04	6,22	1,27
2.6. A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils	6,45	,73	6,58	,88	6,49	1,21
2.7. A safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers	6,52	,75	6,41	,96	6,02	1,50
2.8. Any taken actions about the continuous improvement of the school	5,94	,85	6,19	1,08	6,31	1,14
2.9. The culture of the school	5,59	,87	5,85	1,08	6,24	1,19
2.10. Common strategies and behaviours in classroom teaching	5,53	,99	5,87	1,22	5,53	1,74
2.11. School's links with the wider community contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development	5,28	1,27	5,80	1,17	5,79	1,55
2.12. Efficient and effective use of resources (finance et cetera)	5,91	,83	6,09	1,16	6,38	1,25
2.13. Parents regular visits to school to be informed about their children progress	5,97	1,09	6,15	1,15	6,34	1,10

The three samples recognised that a safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils was extremely important in a school. The three samples might have identified this factor as important for the following reasons:

1. A safe and orderly atmosphere will allow pupils to freely and with confidence express their knowledge, skills and emotions.
2. A safe and orderly atmosphere will allow teachers to work effectively and with commitment to their work and at the same time will allow parents to support teacher's and pupil's work.

The t-test for teachers' gender and the statements showed no significant difference between women and men. No other significant difference was recognised either for the statements or the other sample groups.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor "A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils" ($F(5, 154)=5,14, p<,001$) and the teaching experience of teachers' sample showed that there was some significant difference. Multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience six to ten years and the groups with experience one to five, eleven to fifteen, and sixteen to twenty years. The first group gave less importance to the role of a safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils ($M=6,15, SD=0,77$) than the other three samples, which marked this factor with a higher mean ($M=6,71, SD=0,62$; $M=6,61, SD=0,67$; $M=7, SD=0$). The one-way ANOVA test for factor "A safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers" ($F(5, 155)=3,64, p<,01$) showed significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience six to ten years and eleven to fifteen years respectively meaning that younger teachers gave more importance to a safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers ($M=6,26, SD=,79$; $M=6,78, SD=,55$).

The one-way ANOVA test for factor "A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils" ($F(5, 155)=2,72, p<,05$) and the parents' education showed that there was some significant

difference. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the parents sample group with Secondary education (Gymnasium) and the group with Secondary education (Lyceum) and Higher education (University degree). The parents' sample with lower education gave lower importance to this factor ($M=6,0$, $SD=1,53$) than the other two sample which marked this factor with a higher mean ($M=6,64$, $SD=0,79$; $M=6,70$, $SD=0,51$).

7.4.6. School Level-the two factors with the lowest mean:

The teachers' and pupils' sample marked the factors "Common strategies and behaviours in classroom teaching" ($M=5,53$, $SD=0,99$; $M=5,53$, $SD=1,74$) and "School's links with the wider community contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development" ($M=5,28$, $SD=1,27$; $M=5,79$, $SD=1,55$) with the lowest mean (see Table 14). On the other hand, the parents' sample reported the factors "The culture of the school" ($M=5,85$, $SD=1,08$) and "School's links with the wider community contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development" ($M=5,80$, $SD=1,17$). The three sample groups marked factor "School's links with the wider community contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development" as one of the factors with the minimum importance at this level. The one-way ANOVA test for factor "School's links with the wider community contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development" ($F(2, 505)=1,26$, $p<,28$) showed that there was no significant difference among the three means. The factor "Common strategies and behaviours in classroom teaching" was identified by the teachers' and pupils' sample. The one-way ANOVA test for factor "Common strategies and behaviours in classroom teaching" ($F(2, 509)=,78$, $p<,45$) showed that there was no significant difference among the three means.

There was the belief that the three samples referred the factor "School's links with the wider community contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development" because due

to the strong centralised educational system of Cyprus the wider community did not have any strong links or common programs with the schools that will contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development. The teachers' and pupils' sample referred to factor "Common strategies and behaviours in classroom teaching" due to the well-known formation of a schools' culture and the strong emotions that teachers have about their actions as professionals in the classroom. Common strategies and behaviours in classroom teaching are not something that teachers are willing to accept or discuss because of the high self-esteem levels of teachers. Every teacher is acting in the classroom in the way that they understand their work, using those methods that they found effective. The pupils' sample recognised this factor because it is something that they "see" in their everyday contact with school.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor "Common strategies and behaviours in classroom teaching" ($F(5, 155)=4,03, p<,01$) showed that there was some significant difference among the six means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience sixteen to twenty and the one to five, six to ten, eleven to fifteen groups. The sixteen to twenty group was more positive than the other groups.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor "School's links with the wider community contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development" ($F(5, 154)=5,20, p<,001$) showed that there was some significant difference among the six means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience sixteen to twenty and the one to five, six to ten groups. The sixteen to twenty group was more positive than the other groups.

The t-test for pupils' gender and the statement "Common strategies and behaviours in classroom teaching" showed significant difference ($t(178)=-2,15, p<,05$) between boys and

girls. The effect size was $D=0,32$. Girls were more positive in their views. No other significant difference was recognised either for the statements or the other sample groups.

7.4.7. School Level- Factor Analysis:

The 13 items of the School Level were subjected to factor analysis. The factor analysis for teachers' sample showed that the 13 items could be explained by two factors. Ten variables (2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12 and 2.13) were strongly loading to the first factor. The common factor was the cooperation of all stakeholders in building a common vision and safe atmosphere in school. Two variables (2.1 and 2.3) were strongly loading to the second factor. The common factor was the leader-teachers positive relations and cooperation. One variable 2.2 did not strongly load to either factor. The two variables with the highest mean (2.6, $r=.8$ and 2.7, $r=.7$) could be explained by the same factor. The common factor was the need for all people (e.g. teachers, parents, pupils) to feel safe in their working places. The two variables with the lowest mean (2.10, $r=.8$ and 2.11, $r=.8$) could be explained by the same factor. The common factor was the need for teachers to feel free to work according to their understanding of the teaching procedure and the strategies, behaviours and links with whatever they judge as important and contributes to pupils' learning.

The factor analysis for parents' sample showed that the 13 items could be explained by two factors. Three variables (2.10, 2.11 and 2.12) were strongly loading to the first factor. The common factor was the effective use of resources according to common understanding and cooperation. Three variables (2.1, 2.2 and 2.7) were strongly loading to the second factor. The common factor was the leader-teachers positive relations and cooperation. The other seven variables did not strongly load to either factor.

The factor analysis for pupils' sample showed that the 13 items could be explained by four factors. One variable (2.4) was strongly loading to the first factor and one variable

(2.2) was strongly loading to the second factor. Three variables (2.3, 2.7 and 2.13) were strongly loading to the third factor. The common factor was the positive relations and cooperation between the teachers, the headteacher, and the parents. One variable (2.5) was strongly loading to the fourth factor. The other seven variables did not strongly load to either factor.

7.4.8. School Level-Correlations:

The factors were subjected to correlation analysis. The analysis showed that they were low, medium, and strong correlations between the factors of the School Level for the three sample groups.

The teachers sample group showed strong correlations between the thirteen factors of the School Level. For example, factors “Teachers’ participation in decision-making” and “A Clear and common vision by the leader and the staff” were strongly correlated ($r=.711$, $p<001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that teachers’ involvement in decision-making probably strengthens the head-teacher-staff cooperation and cultivates a common understanding and vision for their school. Another example were factors “School’s links with the wider community contribute to pupils’ attainment and personal development” and “Parents regular visits to school to be informed about their children progress”. They illustrate strong correlation ($r=.741$, $p<001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that school’s links with the wider community and the ethos of the community are strongly related with parents attitude to have regular visits to school.

The parents sample group showed medium and some strong correlations between the thirteen factors of the School Level. For example factors “Strongly educational leadership” and “Leader and teacher co-operation” were strongly correlated ($r=.622$, $p<001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that a strong educational leadership will build a good

leader-teacher co-operation. Factors “Any taken actions about the continuous improvement of the school” and “The culture of the school” were medium correlated ($r=.456$, $p<001$). May be this is due to the belief that the culture of the school will probably determinate the actions taken about SI.

The pupils sample group showed weak and medium correlations between the thirteen factors of the School Level. For example, factors “Strongly educational leadership” and “A Clear and common vision by the leader and the staff” were weakly correlated ($r=.312$, $p<001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that a strong educational leadership may have its own vision which may be not be shared among the staff. Factors “A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils” and “A safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers” were medium correlated ($r=.373$, $p<001$). May be this is due to the belief that a safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils was so important as it was the safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers.

7.4.9. Classroom Level-the two most important factors:

Table 14 shows how important each factor of the Classroom Level is for each sample group.

Table 14. Classroom Level. How important is each statement?

Question A.2. Classroom Level	Teachers' Questionnaire N=165		Parents' Questionnaire N=166		Pupils' Questionnaire N=182	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
3.1. Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils	6,20	,95	6,53	,96	6,67	,79
3.2. The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident	6,40	,92	6,65	,79	6,55	,95
3.3. The teacher gives emphasis on the core knowledge	6,04	1,06	6,34	,99	6,19	1,23
3.4. The teacher gives emphasis on basic skills	5,82	1,06	6,23	1,05	5,65	1,64
3.5. High expectations for pupils' progress by the teacher	5,97	1,03	6,28	1,08	6,18	1,30
3.6. Frequent monitoring and evaluation of pupils progress by the teacher	6,21	,89	6,41	,99	6,11	1,29
3.7. The use of groups in classroom work	5,73	,98	5,93	1,27	5,84	1,71
3.8. The use of co-operative learning in classroom work	5,65	1,22	5,97	1,18	6,04	1,42
3.9. The use of active learning in classroom work	5,85	1,11	6,04	1,18	6,03	1,36
3.10. Rich learning environment	6,25	1,11	6,22	1,12	6,27	1,27
3.11. The use and the amount of homework	5,87	1,09	6,28	1,02	6,28	1,27
3.12. Pupils' positive feedback and reinforcement by the teacher according to each pupil's abilities and difficulties	6,34	,86	6,21	,99	6,34	1,27
3.13. The system of rewards and punishments used by the teacher	5,75	1,05	5,59	1,53	5,28	2,00
3.14. The class size	6,35	,98	6,38	1,20	4,57	2,23
3.15. The use of closed and open questions by the teacher	5,67	1,06	5,62	1,25	5,77	1,55
3.16. The teacher displays pupils' work	5,48	1,02	5,94	1,25	6,12	1,28
3.17. The teacher uses time and resources effectively	6,07	,93	6,34	1,01	5,82	1,51
3.18. The teacher provides opportunities to contribute to pupils' development (personal, spiritual, moral, social et cetera)	6,26	1,02	6,47	,98	6,58	,98
3.19. The teacher evaluates his/her own teaching critically and uses this to improve his/her effectiveness	6,25	,90	6,31	,88	6,24	1,26
3.20. The teacher's experience	5,40	1,12	4,85	1,68	4,18	2,35

The teachers' sample reported as most important the factors "The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident" ($M=6,40$, $SD=0,92$) and "The class size" ($M=6,35$ $SD=0,98$). The parents' sample reported as most important the factors "Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils" ($M=6,53$, $SD=0,96$) and "The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident" ($M=6,65$, $SD=0,79$). The pupils' sample reported as most important the factors "Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils" ($M=6,67$, $SD=0,79$) and "The teacher provides opportunities to contribute to pupils' development (personal, spiritual, moral, social et cetera.)" ($M=6,58$, $SD=0,98$). The factor "Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils" was identified by parents' and pupils' sample. The factor "The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident" was identified by the teachers' and parents' sample. These identifications show that the three samples have same opinions in some issues of the classroom level.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor "Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils" ($F(2, 505)=12,37$, $p<,001$) showed that there was some significant difference among the three means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with the other two groups meaning that parents and pupils have same opinions in this issue but not teachers. The one-way ANOVA test for factor "The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident" ($F(2, 509)=3,39$, $p<,05$) showed that there was some significant difference among the three means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference

between the pupils sample group with the other two groups meaning that teachers and parents have same opinions in this issue.

The parents' and pupils' samples had the same opinions in the "Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils" factor believing that clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils was very important for effective schooling, lessons that maintain motivation and challenge for pupils keep pupils' active learning at a high level and at the same time they encourage pupils to believe in their abilities.

The teachers' and parents' samples had the same opinions in "The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident" factor believing that teacher' ability to establish a safe and quiet environment supports pupils' learning and at the same time they feel secure and confident. The samples believed that if the teacher is not able to establish a safe and quiet atmosphere then whatever other abilities they have it will not be possible to achieve a high level of learning because pupils will not feel secure and confident to freely express their abilities.

The t-test for teachers' gender and the statements "The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident" and "The class size" showed significant difference ($t(158)=3,55$, $p<,001$; $t(157)=3,24$, $p<,001$) between women and men. The effect size was $D=0,78$ and $D=0,7$ respectively. Men were more positive in their views. No other significant difference was recognised either for the statements or the other sample groups.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor "The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident" ($F(5, 155)=2,68$, $p<,05$) showed that there was some significant difference among the six means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference

between the teachers sample group with experience six to ten years and the group with experience eleven to fifteen years. The first group was less positive than the second sample group.

7.4.10. Classroom Level-the two factors with the lowest mean:

The teachers' sample marked factors "The teacher displays pupils' work" ($M=5,48$, $SD=1,02$) and "The teacher's experience" ($M=5,40$, $SD=1,12$) with the lowest mean (see Table 14). The parents' sample reported the factors "The system of rewards and punishments used by the teacher" ($M=5,59$, $SD=1,53$) and "The teacher's experience" ($M=4,85$, $SD=1,68$). The pupils' sample reported the factors "The class size" ($M=4,57$, $SD=2,23$) and "The teacher's experience" ($M=4,18$, $SD=2,35$).

The three sample groups marked factor "The teacher's experience" as one of the factor with minimum importance at this level. The one-way ANOVA test for this factor ($F(2, 505)=19,38$, $p<,001$) showed that there was some significant difference among the three means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the three sample groups. The three samples recognised the characteristic "The teacher's experience" because they all feel that from the moment that the teachers are professionals with higher-level education the teacher's experience does not play a role in their effectiveness. In previous decades where the teachers did not have higher level education this characteristic would play an important role in SE.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor "The teacher displays pupils' work" ($F(5, 154)=11,01$, $p<,001$) showed that there was some significant difference among the six means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience twenty-six and more, one to

five, six to ten, and eleven to fifteen groups. The twenty-six and more group was less positive than the other groups.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor “The teacher’s experience” ($F(5, 154)=11,83$, $p<,001$) showed that there was some significant difference among the six means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience twenty-six and more, one to five, and six to ten groups (the twenty-six and more was less positive) and between sixteen to twenty, one to five, and eleven to fifteen groups (the sixteen to twenty group was less positive than the other two).

The t-test for parents’ gender and the statement “The system of rewards and punishments used by the teacher” showed significant difference ($t(158)=-2,41$, $p<,05$) between women and men. The effect size was $D=0,38$. Women were more positive in their views. No other significant difference was recognised either for the statements or the other sample groups.

7.4.11. Classroom Level-Factor Analysis:

The 20 items of the Classroom Level were subjected to factor analysis. The factor analysis for teachers’ sample showed that the 20 items could be explained by four factors. Six variables (3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8 and 3.17) were strongly loading to the first factor. The common factor is the ability of the teacher to emphasise specific areas of classroom teaching to promote pupils’ learning. Four variables (3.13, 3.15, 3.16 and 3.20) were strongly loading to the second factor. The common factor was teacher’s experience and the way that they handle their contact with pupils. One variable (3.2) was strongly loading to the third factor. Four variables (3.10, 3.14, 3.18 and 3.19) were strongly loading to the fourth factor showing that the common factor was the atmosphere that the teacher creates in the classroom. The other five

variables did not strongly load to either factor. The two variables with the lowest mean (3.16, $r=.8$ and 3.20, $r=.9$) could be explained by the same factor. The common factor was the recognition that each pupil is a unique personality and so must be identified.

The factor analysis for the parents sample showed that the 20 items could be explained by three factors. Nine variables (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.12, 3.14, 3.17, 3.18 and 3.19) were strongly loading to the first factor showing that the common factor was the actions that the teachers get to maximize their pupils' learning. Three variables (3.13, 3.16 and 3.20) were strongly loading to the second factor. The common factor was teacher's experience and the way that they handle their contact with pupils. Two variables (3.7 and 3.8) were strongly loading to the third factor. Their common factor was the cooperation with pupils in classroom work. The other six variables did not strongly load to either factor. The two variables with the highest mean (3.1, $r=.8$ and 3.18, $r=.6$) could be explained by the same factor. It is most likely that the common factor was the belief of parents that the teachers should give opportunities to their pupils to develop their potential and at the same time, their lessons should encompass all those qualities that should promote pupils' development. The two variables with the lowest mean (3.13, $r=.6$ and 3.20, $r=.7$) could be explained by the same factor. According to each teacher's teaching experience, a different system of rewards and punishments will be used. The older teachers had a different approach from the younger teachers.

The factor analysis for pupils' sample showed that the 20 items could be explained by three factors. Four variables (3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.19) were strongly loading to the first factor showing that the common factor was the actions that the teachers get to maximize their pupils' learning. Two variables (3.4 and 3.5) were strongly loading to the second factor. The common factor was the ability of the teacher to emphasise specific areas of classroom teaching to promote pupils' learning. Two variables (3.10 and 3.16) were strongly loading to

the third factor. The common factor was the rich classroom environment and the display of pupils' work. The other twelve variables did not strongly load to either factor.

7.4.12. Classroom Level-Correlations:

The factors were subjected to correlation analysis, which showed weak, modest, and strong correlations between the factors of the Classroom Level for the three sample groups.

The teachers sample group showed strong correlations between the twenty factors of the Classroom Level. For example, factors "Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils" and "The teacher gives emphasis on the core knowledge" were strongly correlated ($r=.745$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that the clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge of pupils will be focus on the core knowledge. Factors "The system of rewards and punishments used by the teacher" and "The use of closed and open questions by the teacher" showed strong correlation ($r=.846$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that the use of closed and open questions by the teachers helps them to get good feedback from their pupils and to apply the right system of rewards and punishments.

The parents sample group showed modest and some strong correlations between the twenty factors of the Classroom Level. For example factors "Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils" and "The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident" were strongly correlated ($r=.684$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge of pupils will support a safe and quiet environment because pupils feel secure and confident. Factors "High expectations for pupils' progress by the teacher" and "Frequent monitoring and evaluation of pupils progress by the teacher" illustrated modest correlation ($r=.548$, $p<.001$). May be this is due to the belief that

the teachers who have high expectations for their pupils' progress will frequently monitor and evaluate their pupils progress probably in order to get regular feedback about their pupils achievements.

The pupils sample group showed weak and modest correlations between the twenty factors of the Classroom Level. For example, factors "Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils" and "The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident" were modestly correlated ($r=.465$, $p<.001$). May be this is due to the belief that clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge will support a safe and quiet environment because pupils feel secure and confident. Factors "Pupils' positive feedback and reinforcement by the teacher according to each pupil's abilities and difficulties" and "The teacher evaluates his/her own teaching critically and use this to improve his/her effectiveness" gave modest correlation ($r=.357$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that teachers' self-evaluation will assist pupils' positive feedback and reinforcement from their teacher.

7.4.13. Pupils Level-the two most important factors:

Table 15 shows the factors of the Pupils Level for each sample group. The parents' sample reported as most important the characteristics "Pupils' encouragement to reach their maximum potential" ($M=6.60$, $SD=0.91$) and "Pupils' motivation by the teacher" ($M=6.57$, $SD=0.82$). The teachers' and pupils' sample reported as most important the factors "Pupils' encouragement to reach their maximum potential" ($M=6.45$, $SD=0.74$; $M=6.69$, $SD=0.76$) and "Pupils' opportunity to learn" ($M=6.38$, $SD=0.74$; $M=6.79$, $SD=0.71$). The three sample groups marked factor "Pupils' encouragement to reach their maximum potential" as one of the most important factors at this level. The factor "Pupils' opportunity to learn" was identified by the teachers' and pupils' sample. Table 15, shows the statements of Pupils' Level.

Table 15. Pupils’ Level. How important is each statement?

Question A.2. Pupils’ Level	Teachers’ Questionnaire N=165		Parents’ Questionnaire N=166		Pupils’ Questionnaire N=182	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
4.1. Pupils’ positive behaviour at school and classroom	6,18	,88	6,33	1,07	6,35	1,21
4.2. Pupils’ everyday help and support by the teacher	6,12	,86	6,46	,84	6,45	1,17
4.3. Pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential	6,45	,74	6,60	,91	6,69	,76
4.4. Pupils’ motivation by the teacher	6,38	,75	6,57	,82	6,46	1,10
4.5. Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations of themselves	6,05	1,18	6,06	1,25	6,58	,88
4.6. Pupils’ achievements in school work	6,24	,87	6,12	1,04	6,59	,78
4.7. Emphasis on pupils meta-cognitive skills	6,38	,83	6,25	1,08	5,99	1,53
4.8. Pupils’ opportunity to learn	6,38	,74	6,53	1,08	6,79	,71
4.9. Pupils are actively involve in school life	6,28	1,02	6,45	,97	6,68	,82

The one-way ANOVA test for factor “Pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential” ($F(2, 509)=3,72, p<,05$) showed that there was some significant difference among the three means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group and the pupils sample group. On the other hand, there was no significant difference between parents sample group and the other two groups meaning that parents had the same opinions in this issue with the other groups. The one-way ANOVA test for factor “Pupils’ opportunity to learn” ($F(2, 509)=10,03, p<,001$) showed that there was some significant difference among the three means. Again, using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the pupils sample group and the other two groups meaning that pupils have different opinions on this issue but not teachers with parents.

The three sample groups marked factor “Pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential” as one of the most important of this level, for the same reason: if the pupils are not able to accept the learning procedure, for various reasons, any kind of learning action will not achieve the expected results. Also, the factor “Pupils’ opportunity to learn” might have been identified by the teachers’ and pupils’ sample for the same reason. If the school, and especially the teacher, is not able to establish learning conditions that will allow pupils the opportunity to learn, then, whatever the abilities of the pupils are they will not be able to demonstrate them. Teachers and pupils are directly connected to everyday school life and it is very common to have common ideas.

The t-test for teachers’ gender and the statements “Pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential” showed significant difference ($t(158)=2,10, p<,05$) between women and men. The effect size was $D=0,39$. Men were more positive in their views. No other significant difference was recognised either for the statements or the other samples.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor “Pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential” ($F(5, 155)=3,26, p<,01$) showed that there was some significant difference among the six means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience one to five and six to ten years. The first group was more positive in this factor.

7.4.14. Pupil Level-the two factors with the lowest mean:

The teachers’ sample marked the factors “Pupils’ everyday help and support by the teacher” ($M=6,12, SD=,86$) and “Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations of themselves” ($M=6,05, SD=1,18$) with the lowest mean (see Table 15). The parents’ sample reported the factors “Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations of themselves” ($M=6,06, SD=1,25$) and “Pupils’ achievements in school work” ($M=6,12, SD=1,04$). The pupils’ sample reported the factors “Pupils’ positive behaviour at school and classroom” ($M=6,35, SD=1,21$) and “Emphasis on pupils meta-cognitive skills” ($M=5,99, SD=1,53$). The factor “Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations of themselves” was identified by the parents’ and teachers’ sample. The one-way ANOVA test for factor “Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations of themselves” ($F(2, 509)=12,85, p<,001$) showed that there was some significant difference among the three means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the pupils sample group and the other two groups meaning that pupils have different opinions in this issue but not teachers and parents.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor “Pupils’ everyday help and support by the teacher” ($F(5, 154)=3,63, p<,01$) showed that there was some significant difference among the six means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience sixteen to twenty and the six to ten years. The sixteen to twenty group was more positive.

The one-way ANOVA test for factor “Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations of themselves” ($F(5, 155)=5,87, p<,001$) showed that there was some significant difference among the six means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience six to ten years and the eleven to fifteen, sixteen to twenty group. The six to ten group was less positive than the other groups.

The t-test for pupils' gender and the statement “Emphasis on pupils meta-cognitive skills” showed significant difference ($t(179)=-3,12, p<,01$) between boys and girls. The effects size was $D=0,48$. Girls were more positive in their views. No other significant difference was recognised either for the statements or the other sample groups.

7.4.15. Pupils Level-Factor Analysis:

The nine items of the Pupils Level were subjected to factor analysis. The factor analysis for the teachers sample showed that the nine items could be explained by two factors. Six variables (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6) were strongly loading to the first factor. The common factor was the support to pupils to build a positive attitude to school. Three variables (4.7, 4.8 and 4.9) were strongly loading to the second factor showing that the common factor was the establishing of the conditions that will give pupils them the opportunity to learn. The two variables with the lowest mean (4.2, $r=.9$ and 4.5, $r=.7$) could be explained by the same factor. It is most likely that the common factor was the support of the teacher to each pupil, which will lead to better outcomes and pupils, will achieve better results.

The factor analysis for the parents' sample showed that the nine items could be explained by two factors. Four variables (4.3, 4.4, 4.8 and 4.9) were strongly loading to the first factor. The common factor was the support to pupils that will enable them to take advantage of all given opportunities. Two variables (4.1 and 4.5) were strongly loading to the

second factor. The common factor was the support to pupils to build a positive attitude towards school. The other three variables did not strongly load to either factor. The two variables with the highest mean (4.3, $r=.8$ and 4.4, $r=.6$) could be explained by the same factor. The common factor was the need to motivate, encourage and support pupils so that they will have every opportunity to learn. At the same time this opportunity will support pupils to reach their maximum potential.

The factor analysis for pupils' sample showed that the nine items could be explained by two factors. Four variables (4.1, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.6) were strongly loading to the first factor. The common factor was the support to pupils to build a positive attitude to school. The other five variables did not strongly load to either factor.

7.4.16. Pupils Level-Correlations:

The factors were subjected to correlation analysis. The analysis showed that there were weak, medium, and strong correlations between the factors of the Pupils Level for the three sample groups.

The teachers sample group showed strong correlations between the nine factors of the Pupils Level. For example factors "Pupils' positive behaviour at school and classroom" and "Pupils' everyday help and support by the teacher" were strongly correlated ($r=.868$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that teachers' empowerment, help and support to their pupils will lead to pupil's positive behaviour at school and classroom. Factors "Emphasis on pupils meta-cognitive skills" and "Pupils' opportunity to learn" gave strong correlation ($r=.762$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that when emphasis is given on pupils meta-cognitive skills will provide pupils' more opportunities to learn.

The parents sample group showed modest correlations between the nine factors of the Pupils Level. For example, factors "Pupils' positive behaviour at school and classroom" and

“Pupils’ everyday help and support by the teacher” were modestly correlated ($r=.477$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that teachers’ empowerment, help and support to their pupils will lead in many cases to pupil’s positive behaviour at school and classroom. Factors “Pupils’ motivation by the teacher” and “Pupils are actively involve in school life” were modestly correlated ($r=.439$, $p<.001$). Probably the reason for this is the belief that pupils’ motivation by the teacher will support pupils actively involvement in school life.

The pupils sample group showed weak and modest correlations between the nine factors of the Pupils Level. For example, factors “Pupils’ motivation by the teacher” and “Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations of themselves” were modestly correlated ($r=.419$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that pupils’ motivation by the teacher will support pupils self-esteem and expectations of themselves. Factors “Pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential” and “Pupils’ achievements in school work” illustrated modest correlation ($r=.328$, $p<.001$). May be the reason for this is the belief that pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential will lead to better pupils’ achievements in schoolwork.

7.5. Question B.1.1: Do you have a development plan in your school?

The results showed that the majority of the teachers (81%) and parents sample (66,7%) answered that they did not have a development plan in their school. On the other hand, 19% of teachers and 33,3% of parents answered that they have a development plan in their school.

In correlation to the previous question, the sample groups were asked to report and discuss the development plan that they had (if they had) one in their school. It was clear from the answers of most people (teachers and parents) that there was a misunderstanding or contextual validity issue of the term "development plan". Many people reported the implementation of computers in the school as a development plan, others the visit to a

museum or the construction of new classrooms et cetera. In another situation the teachers reported the help of a special education teacher for specific pupils as a development plan.

In studying teachers' answers one can distinguish two programmes that could be described as development plans. The first one was the participation of the school in the European program Socrates that aims to build a common understanding between the European countries; to learn, understand and respect the culture of the other countries. Actually it was not a development plan because it was not implemented in order to improve and develop specific aspects of school life that were recognised as problematic. The second program was the use of Active Learning Methodology in everyday classroom lessons, which was implemented to improve pupils' learning, and self-concept.

The parents also reported the European program Socrates and the improvement of the oral and written speech. There were also some references about the implementation of computers in classroom teaching and the expansion of schooling and in the afternoon with lessons such as English language, Computers, Art, Dancing, Supporting pupils in their homework et cetera.

The above results were disappointing knowing that eighteen schools took part in the research and only one had a development plan. This did not mean that schools in Cyprus, especially those in the area of Nicosia, work without any problems and no development plans are needed. According to my understanding no development plan existed for the following reasons:

1. The leader uses most of his time in bureaucratic actions neglecting the needs of their pupils and parents (Yoshida, 1994) and the need to recognise the special needs of his/her school. That is supported and by Pashiardis (1998) who interviewed headteachers in Cyprus. They mentioned that they do not have the time to be the kind of leader they want to be, because of the many bureaucratic chores they have to deal with.

2. Most leaders did not have a vision for their school, which must be shared with their staff. This has to do with the short period they serve as leaders due to the shortcoming of the system.

3. The absence of initiative by the teachers to improve and develop their school. Teaching is a lonely profession and teachers see their classroom as the center of the school ignoring the school and the common directions.

4. The evaluation system of teachers and the misunderstanding of the role of inspectors, which their main concern, is to evaluate the work of teachers neglecting their supportive role.

The inferential statistical analysis (Chi-Square) between the Question B.1.1 and the samples' characteristics did not show any associations.

7.6. Question B.1.2: Do you need a development plan in your school?

The majority of the teachers' sample (52,8%) answered that they did not need a development plan in their school. On the other hand, the majority of the parents' sample (80,3%) answered that they need a development plan in their school. The X^2 test for Question B.1.2 and the teachers' experience ($X^2(5)=15,90$, $p<,01$) showed that the two variables were significantly associated with each other. One can conclude that teacher experience plays an important role to their views about the role of development plans. A more careful study showed that the teachers with teaching experience of more than fifteen years had a more positive opinion about the role of development plans. Running a similar test for parents' age, profession, education and their answers in Question B.1.2 did not show any significant association implying that age, profession and education does not play any role in parents' views.

The sample groups were asked to describe the development plan that in their opinions the school needed. The samples gave a variety of ideas but only some of them could be described as development plans. This identification supports my previous report (see point 7.5) about

the role of development plans in Cypriot schools. Some of the most common ideas-themes for development plans that the teachers reported are:

1. Improvement of oral and written speech.
2. Problem solving in mathematics.
3. Development of critical thinking and oral expression.
4. Development and improvement of pupils' self-discipline.

The above themes could be used to produce a development plan because they focus on specific issues of schoolwork and have to do with the abilities of pupils in school, cognitive or psychological, and the ways that it could be improved.

Although most parents described as development programmes themes that covered the resources of the school (e.g. implementation of computers, improvement of school building) one can find some programmes that could be described as SI plans and cover a variety of contexts that has to do with schoolwork:

1. Improving the study skills of pupils.
2. Development of self-esteem and self-concept of pupils.
3. Improving teaching in mixed ability classrooms.

7.7. Question B.2: Do you believe that IN-SET programmes help teachers to improve and develop their school?

The majority of the sample groups, both teachers (98,1%) and parents (96,5%), answered that the IN-SET programmes help teachers to improve and develop their school. The χ^2 test for Question B.2 and the teachers service in school ($\chi^2(4)=13,24$, $p<,01$) showed that the two variables were significantly associated with each other concluding that the service in school gives teachers the ability to make judgements about SE and/or teachers development. The χ^2 test for Question B.2 and the teachers' experience ($\chi^2(1)=,74$, $p<,98$) showed that the two

variables were not significantly associated with each other. The χ^2 test for Question B.2 and the parents' age ($\chi^2(4)=38,65$, $p<,001$) showed that the two variables were significantly associated with each other. One can conclude that the younger parents were more positive about the role of IN-SET programmes and the support that they can offer to the teachers. The χ^2 test for Question B.2 and the parents' gender ($\chi^2(1)=,83$, $p<,36$) showed that the two variables were not significantly associated with each other.

In the same question the two samples were asked to explain why they believe that IN-SET programmes help or did not help teachers to improve and develop their school. Studying the answers of both samples, one can conclude that the majority of teachers and parents believed that the IN-SET programmes are important for three main assumptions:

1. The IN-SET programmes are essential for all kind of jobs because the times change and new knowledge is built. So, every professional must "search" for new ideas and approaches to improve his/her work. Moreover, the teaching profession is unique because its "customers" are unique.
2. The IN-SET programmes give specific directions that can be applied to the school and improve the class-work, and the teachers are personally committed to the aims of the IN-SET.
3. Due to the themes of most IN-SET programmes which relate to school life, the teachers are personally committed to the aims of the IN-SET.

7.8. Question B.3. "What I believe about my school"

In Table 16 one can see the results of the four statements of the question "What I believe about my school" for each sample group. In the first column are the statements, in the second column the Mean (M) and in the third the Standard Deviation (SD). The four statements show how the samples felt about their school and especially whatever they believe that their schools were able to improve, by whom and whatever an IN-SET programme could help.

Table 16. What I believe about my school

Question B.3	Teachers' Questionnaire N=165		Parents' Questionnaire N=166	
	M	SD	M	SD
3.1. I believe that my school could be improved	5,15	1,46	5,36	1,38
3.2. I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school	5,21	1,29	5,99	1,17
3.3. I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school	5,08	1,43	5,71	1,35
3.4. I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school	5,32	1,26	5,64	1,36

The statements in the teachers' and parents' questionnaire were the same (the differences are written in parenthesis). In the pupils' questionnaire, only the first statement was the same because it would be difficult for pupils to understand the role or discuss IN-SET programmes. Pupils were asked to express their beliefs about the role of their parents, teachers, and head/deputy-heads for SI (see Table 17).

In the first statement, which was common for the three samples, the pupils had the most positive attitude towards their school's ability to improve (M=6,42, SD=1,13). In the other three statements the parents' sample had a more positive attitude than the teachers' sample.

The one-way ANOVA test for variables "I believe that my school could be improved", "I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school", "I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school" and "I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school" ($F(2, 500)=45,61, p<,001$; $F(2, 496)=16,01, p<,001$; $F(2, 495)=10,76, p<,001$; $F(2, 487)=5,01, p<,05$)) showed that there was some significant difference among the two means. Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that:

1. Statement “I believe that my school could be improved”, there was significant difference between the pupils sample group and the other two groups, meaning that pupils had different opinions on this issue but not teachers and parents.
2. Statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school” and “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school” there was significant difference between the teachers and parents sample groups meaning, that teachers had different opinions on these issues with parents.
3. Statement “I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school” there was no significant difference between the teachers and the parents sample groups.

The t-test analysis for the teachers sample group between the four statements and their gender showed that the means were significantly different for statements “I believe that my school could be improved” and “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school” ($t(155)=2,55$, $p<,05$; $t(153)=2,77$, $p<,01$). The effect size was $D=0,45$ and $D=0,48$. The men were more positive in their answers.

The t-test analysis for the teachers sample group between the four statements and the B.1.1 Question showed that the means were significantly different. The t-test for statement “I believe that my school could be improved”, “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school” and “I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school” showed $t(149)=2,26$, $p<,01$, $t(147)=4,66$, $p<,001$ and $t(143)=3,93$, $p<,001$ respectively. The effect size was $D=0,5$, $D=0,93$ and $D=0,87$ respectively. This means that those teachers who answered "Yes" in Question B.1.1 were more positive in their belief that their school could be improved, in the role of IN-

SET and the support they could offer to teachers to develop and improve their school and finally in the belief that their colleagues could be interested in taking part in an IN-SET to support their school. No significant difference was found for the parents sample group.

The t-test analysis for the teachers sample group between the four statements and the B.1.2 Question showed that the means were significantly different only for statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school”. The t-test showed $t(85)=2,08$, $p<,05$. The effect size was $D=0,45$. This mean that those teachers who answered "Yes" in Question B.1.2 were more positive in their belief that IN-SET programmes could support teachers to develop and improve their school. No significant difference was found for the parents sample group.

The t-test analysis for the four statements and the B.2 Question showed that the means were significantly different. To be more specific:

1. For the parents sample the t-test for statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school” and “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school” showed $t(135)=3,37$, $p<,001$ and $t(135)=2,18$, $p<,05$ respectively. The effect size was $D=0,82$ and $D=0,62$ respectively. This means that those parents who answered "Yes" in Question B.2 were more positive about the role of IN-SET and the support they could offer to staff to develop and improve their school.

2. For the teachers sample the t-test for statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school” and “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school” showed $t(155)=3,05$, $p<,003$ and $t(155)=2,61$, $p<,01$ respectively. The effect size was $D=1,5$ and $D=1,3$ respectively. This means that those teachers who answered "Yes" in

Question B.2 were more positive about the role of IN-SET and the support they could offer to the staff to develop and improve their school.

The statistical analysis for the teachers sample group showed very strong and significant positive 2-tailed correlation between the four variables. To be more specific:

1. The statement “I believe that my school could be improved” with the other three statements “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school” ($r=0,689$, $p<,001$), “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school” ($r=0,757$, $p<,001$) and “I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school” ($r=0,696$, $p<,001$) meaning that they were positively associated with each other.

2. The statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school” with the other two statements “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school” ($r=0,726$, $p<,001$) and “I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school” ($r=0,728$, $p<,001$) meaning that they were positively associated with each other.

3. The statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school” with statement “I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school” ($r=0,789$, $p<,001$).

The one-way ANOVA test for the four statements and the teachers’ teaching experience showed that there was some significant difference ($F(5, 152)=4,82$, $p<,001$; $F(5, 150)=3,66$, $p<,01$; $F(5, 150)=3,06$, $p<,05$; $F(5, 145)=5,80$, $p<,001$). Using multiple

comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the teachers sample group with experience:

- Six to ten years and the one to five, sixteen to twenty years for statement “I believe that my school could be improved” .
- Six to ten and sixteen to twenty group for statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school”.
- One to five and the six to ten group for statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school”.
- Six to ten and the one to five, sixteen to twenty group for statement “I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested to take part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school”.

On the other hand, the parents sample group showed medium and strong significant positive 2-tailed correlation between the four variables:

1. Statement “I believe that my school could be improved” with the other three statements “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school” ($r=0,320$, $p<,001$), “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school” ($r=0,401$, $p<,001$) and “I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school” ($r=0,267$, $p<,001$) meaning that they were positively associated with each other.
2. The statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me/the teachers to develop and improve our school” with the other two statements “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school” ($r=0,675$, $p<,001$) and “I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us

- (them) to improve our school” ($r=0,430$, $p<,001$) meaning that they were positively associated with each other.
3. The statement “I believe that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher to develop and improve our school” with statement “I believe that my colleagues/the teachers of my school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help us (them) to improve our school” ($r=0,425$, $p<,001$).

The one-way ANOVA test for the four statements and the parents’ education showed that there was some significant difference ($F(5, 149)=2,57$, $p<,05$). Using multiple comparisons (Post hoc Tukey HSD) showed that there was significant difference between the parents sample group with Primary Education and Ph.D. Education.

As previously reported, pupils were asked to express their beliefs about their school. The statement “I believe that my school could be improved” in Table 17 shows a very positive belief of pupils about the ability of their school to be improved. The statements “I believe that the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher could improve our school” and “I believe that our teachers could improve our school” got high means ($M=5,75$, $SD=1,62$; $M=5,80$, $SD=1,52$) showing that pupils believe that both teachers and heads can develop and improve their school. On the other hand, the pupils did not believe in the same way that their parents could develop and improve their school ($M=5,15$, $SD=1,87$).

Table 17. Pupils: What I believe about my school

Question B.3	Pupils' Questionnaire N=182	
	M	SD
3.1. I believe that my school could be improved	6,42	1,13
3.2. I believe that my parents could help our school to be improved	5,15	1,87
3.3. I believe that the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher could improve our school	5,75	1,62
3.4. I believe that our teachers could improve our school	5,80	1,52

7.8.1. Factor Analysis-“What I believe about my school”:

The four items of the Question were subjected to factor analysis. The factor analysis for teachers' sample showed that the four items could be explained by two factors. One variable (B.3.1) was strongly loading to the first factor and one variable (B.3.4) was strongly loading to the second factor. The other two variables did not strongly load to either factor.

The factor analysis for parents' sample showed that the four items could be explained by two factors. One variable (B.3.1) was strongly loading to the first factor and three variables (B.3.2, B.3.3 and B.3.4) were strongly loading to the second factor. The three variables B.3.2, $r=.8$, B.3.3, $r=.7$ and B.3.4, $r=.8$ could be explained by the same factor. The common factor was the belief that an IN-SET program would help the teachers of the school to develop and improve their school. The statistical analysis showed medium and significant positive 2-tailed correlation between the four variables:

1. The statement 3.1 was positively associated with the other three statements 3.2 ($r=0,305$, $p<,001$), 3.3 ($r=0,358$, $p<,001$) and 3.4 ($r=0,387$, $p<,001$).
2. The statement 3.4 with statements 3.2 ($r=0,264$, $p<,001$) and 3.3 ($r=0,558$, $p<,001$). The correlation between 3.3 and 3.4 was strong and significantly positive, which supports the previous comment that pupils, teachers and heads feel that SI was within their possibilities.

The factor analysis for the pupils' sample showed that the four items could be explained by two factors. Two variables (B.3.3 and B.3.4) were strongly loading to the first factor and one variable (B.3.2) was strongly loading to the second factor. The other variable did not strongly load to either factor. The two variables B.3.3, $r=.9$, and B.3.4, $r=.8$ could be explained by the same factor, the belief that the staff of the school (headteachers, deputy heads and teachers) could develop and improve their school.

7.9. Summarising

In this chapter a description and analysis of the results of the data collected by the questionnaires for the three sample groups has been made. In the next chapter an analysis of the interviews of the three sample groups will be conducted.

CHAPTER 8. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

8.1. Introduction

In the following pages a discussion on the results of the interviews' data collected from teachers, parents and pupils will occur. Qualitative data will be reported to support the interviews' findings giving a summary with brief comments. Five teachers (including a headteacher and a deputy head), five parents, and seven pupils were interviewed. This small sample minimised the disadvantage of interviews, which is the difficulty in analysing responses, but on the other hand the interviews' sample did not guarantee the respondents over a wide geographic area or the generalization of the research findings.

Finally, an issue that was connected with the interviews was the translation of the original manuscript from Greek to English. Even though no serious problems occurred in the translation procedure, there is always the danger of misunderstanding some contents or issues due to the different glossary, culture and experiences of the interviewees.

8.2. Interview Questions

In the following pages a discussion on the responses of the interviewees for each level of schooling will be made. Issues such as the random order of the factors that contribute to SE as those were identified in the questionnaires; the importance of the factors in each level; the implications for improvement and development will be discussed and analysed. The interviewees were asked to discuss only the two most important and the two least important factors of each level of the questionnaire. It was not possible to discuss all the factors because each level encompassed twelve to twenty characteristics, which made the discussion and analysis extremely difficult.

The interviews were conducted in the homes of the interviewees for confidentiality reasons. There was not any need for anyone to know that those people were interviewed. The

arrangements were made directly with the interviewees so no reason existed for anyone else to be engaged into the whole process. At the same time it made people feel freer and secure to express their opinions, beliefs and understandings about SE. In addition, this was extremely important for the pupils, because they felt freer at home and also I needed their parents' permission for the interview.

All the interviews were tape recorded with the consent of the interviewee. Pseudonyms were used each time the name of an interviewee is reported. Table 18, shows the pseudonyms of each interviewee and some personal information.

Table 18. Personal information of the interviewees

Pseudonym	Sample Group	Gender	Status	Age
Peter	Headteacher	Male	Head	51
Elias	Teacher	Male	Teacher of Fifth Grade	30
Marios	Teacher	Male	Teacher of Fourth Grade	32
Levki	Teacher	Female	Teacher of Third Grade	32
Christina	Deputy Head	Female	Fifth Grade	47
Doros	Parent	Male	Bank employee	40
Nicos	Parent	Male	Architect	39
Costas	Parent	Male	Bank employee	42
Viki	Parent	Female	Educational Psychologist	36
Thalia	Parent	Female	House wife	35
Georgia	Pupil	Girl	Sixth Grade	11
Gloria	Pupil	Girl	Sixth Grade	11
Evi	Pupil	Girl	Sixth Grade	11
Elina	Pupil	Girl	Sixth Grade	11
Andreas	Pupil	Boy	Sixth Grade	11
Haris	Pupil	Boy	Sixth Grade	11
George	Pupil	Boy	Sixth Grade	11

8.3. Analysing the interviews

One problem in this kind of studies is whether the opinions, beliefs and understandings of the sample group, they represent a well spread belief among the population they belong to e.g. the

teachers. This was not realistic because each sample group was not representative for the population it belonged to. For that reason, one thing one can do is to get some impressions of each sample group responses by looking at how many people actually reported the same view. To do so I will use the method that was used in Evans et al. (1994): each time I report, discuss or analyse a view, opinion or understanding I will report in parenthesis how many people of the specific sample group shared the same opinion, e.g. (T, 2:2:1) means that two teachers agreed with this idea, two disagreed and one did not say anything or did not hold any strong ideas or beliefs. One must be very careful in this kind of analysis because a report (T, 1:2:2) is most likely different from (T, 2:1:2) or (T, 2:2:1) but one cannot guarantee that their difference was significantly important because the sample group was very small. In order to minimise such problems and be more valid in the discussion and analysis, I decided to report the results of each sample group in the same issue where the samples have identified the same factor. For example in the Context Level the factor 1.11 was identified by three sample groups, 1.10 by two sample groups and 1.7 by one sample group. For factor 1.11 the results will be presented as (T, 4:1:0) (P, 4:0:1) (Pu, 2:5:0) means that four teachers (T), four parents (P) and two pupils (Pu) agreed with this idea, one teacher, no parents and five pupils disagreed and no teachers, one parent and no pupils did not say anything about it or did not hold any strong ideas or beliefs. If one looks at the results as a total means that ten people agreed with this idea, six people disagreed and one person did not say anything or did not hold any strong ideas or beliefs. In this way it will add to the validity of the discussion and the analysis. For factor 1.10 the results will be presented as (P, 2:2:1) (Pu, 2:5:0) because only the parents and the pupils identified it. For factor 1.7 the results will be presented as (T, 5:0:0) because only the teachers identified it. In conclusion, one must acknowledge that the aim in this chapter was to give reasons why the specific factors were identified and not how many

interviewees agree with this idea or if that idea is representative for all the population they represent.

8.3.1. Context Level:

The interviewees were asked to discuss and analyse the two most important and the two factors with the least importance at the Context level as the various stakeholders identified those in the questionnaire. The intention was to search for evidence that will explain the reasons for those characteristics existence, to try to explain why people gave those identifications, which reasons and thoughts can explain their understanding.

8.3.1.1. Context Level-The two most important factors:

Teachers identified factor 1.7 (Parents' support and assistance to their children's progress) as one of the most important for SE at the Context Level. All the teachers in the interviews supported this idea (T, 5:0:0). This clearly showed that teachers had a common belief on this issue. They felt that the time pupils spent at school was not enough to develop their personality in all areas (knowledge, emotions, skills, morals et cetera.). The teachers shared a common understanding that the parents must support their children in order to develop their personality, abilities and skills.

"I strongly agree with factor 1.7 because I believe that the help of parents is very important in the progress of their children because surely, the child cannot be helped only in the limited time that it is at school but he/she needs the support and assistance from his/her parents. He/she needs support in all areas of schooling."

(Elias)

In addition to the above identification, Marios recognised another issue that supports the teachers' belief: the issue of taking into account pupils home background factors in order to improve their progress. He reported:

“Maybe this factor is a way for teachers to justify many of the problems they have at school with pupils that have learning difficulties. Usually these pupils do not have the support, psychological, mental, emotional from their parents and in a way it is the easy road to tell that the pupil is alone and that is why we have these problems. So our results are not so good, are not at the level we would like to be. Even though we work a lot with this kind of pupils their progress is not as high as the pupils that they have support from their parents. ”

(Marios)

The parents and pupils identified factor 1.10 (The building maintenance and the resources of the school). In the interviews the sample groups did not support the importance of this factor (P, 2:2:1) (Pu, 2:5:0). The interviewees that had a different opinion justified their argument on the assumption that nothing was more important than people (teachers, pupils) for SE. On the other hand, some interviewees expressed the belief that a well designed school with an attractive appearance and environment, good functioning of classrooms, halls et cetera made people feel good and psychologically strengthens them. Costas did not agree with factor 1.10. He justified his argument by saying that:

“I do not think that we can say that the building maintenance and the resources of the school...surely they play their role but if you ask me on what we must do to a school in order to be more effective I would say that the building maintenance and the resources of the school are one of the last factors. That is strange because I would expect parents to report factors such as the teachers and the content of their studies and not this. ”

(Costas)

In addition to what Costas said Doros reported that:

“The most important factor I believe is people...the teachers and the headteacher. ”

Then why did parents identify factor 1.10?

“Probably because as humans we see the most obvious problems that have to do with materials. The problems that affect people, management, the communication are more difficult to be identified and to solve, so it is easier (for people) to recognise the more obvious ones. ”

(Doros)

On the other hand, Nicos, agreed with this factor reporting that:

“The building maintenance and the resources of the school, I believe, play an important role because it makes people feel nice...it is the first impression and if you have the necessary resources the teachers and the pupils will be able to work effectively. It is very important for the pupils to enter a building that has all the necessary equipment, resources, rooms...the pupils will go to school with a positive attitude because the school’s environment makes them feel good.”

Most of the pupils sample group agreed that 1.10 factor was not so important.

Their common understanding was based on the assumption that if you have good teachers then the role of the building and its resources comes second.

“I do not see why people believe that 1.10 factor is so important because a school might not be good (the building, the resources) but have very good teachers...”

(Andreas)

The three sample groups identified the factor 1.11 (The quality of the textbooks) as one of the most important factors for SE. In the interviews, the sample groups supported the importance of this factor (T, 4:1:0) (P, 4:0:1) (Pu, 3:4:0). The perceptions of the three sample groups as those were expressed in the interviews had a common characteristic: the quality of textbooks is important to support the role of teachers, parents and pupils and to help the curriculum consumption effectively. Each sample group gave its own ideas about how the quality of textbooks supported their role.

There was a strong belief among teachers that the textbooks give security and guidance to the teacher, to his/her lesson and to the everyday class work. So better (quality) textbooks mean better teaching, better learning, and better results.

Marios, stated:

“The inspectors say that the textbooks are just part of the school work and our guideline is the curriculum and we may choose to teach any other theme we want other than the themes of the textbook. But the teachers need...in order to be able to teach effectively, to feel secure, to need less time to organise and plan a lesson and to be sure that they teach something secure...because we must be honest that it is not easy to teach something other than what it is in the textbook, to write your own

exercises and assignments, it is not something that you can do everyday. For all those reasons we focus our work on the textbooks, which now do not satisfy our standards. What we teach is not effective at the level that we want."

So, you see that the teachers recognised this factor in order to say that they are not satisfied with the current textbooks.

"Yes, surely there is the need to have better quality books to achieve better results and to keep children's interest at a high level."

(Marios)

There was another belief supported by one teacher that the quality of textbooks is not so important for effective schooling. Christina, said:

"I do not believe that the quality of the textbooks is so important for effective schooling because the most important element is the teacher and how he/she uses the textbooks. It is the teacher that makes the textbook what it is and you do not accept it as it is, it is up to the teacher to use it effectively... From the moment that the teachers recognise this factor as important it was expected that the parents and pupils would recognise it also because both are convinced that the textbooks are important. If you covered the curriculum consumption according to the textbook then you are a good teacher and a good pupil, then the textbook is very important. But what about if the teacher covered the same theme in a different way and more effectively? Yes, most people believe that if you covered the curriculum according to the textbook then you are a very good teacher. But it is more than that; we use so many things in a lesson. If it was that easy then anyone could use the textbook and anyone could teach."

(Christina)

Almost all parents supported the importance of this characteristic. They supported the belief that quality textbooks were needed in order to support parents when they assist their children in their homework and to know at any time the curriculum consumption. Costas, supported this idea:

"It seems that as important it is for teachers to have quality textbooks it is also important for parents which according to the established educational system are obliged to give much support and to spend much time in the afternoon to help their children in order to accumulate and to consolidate what they learned at school, in this way the parents need the support of the textbook... The parents need quality textbooks to support them in their effort to assist their children."

(Costas)

On the other hand, some parents even though they supported the importance of the quality of textbooks gave a different reason. Nicos and Doros, supported this reason by stating almost the same thing:

“Surely, I believe that the quality of the textbooks is very important but at the same time I do not believe totally in the textbook, it has a major role but...”

Why do you say so from the moment that you recognise it is very important?

“Because, you see, the teacher is everything and not the textbook. The textbook has a very important role to play, will support teachers’ role but the teacher is more important to understand the psychology of pupils, the methods he/she is using.”

(Nicos)

Likewise, the ideas of Doros:

“Yes, I believe that factor 1.11 is very important but at the same time I feel that people are more important, teachers are more important. The quality of textbooks will support teachers’ role.”

(Doros)

There is a controversy in the above references because although the two parents accepted that characteristic 1.11 was one of the most important for effective schooling at the same time they underlined how important the role of teachers was and how it was up to the teacher to use any textbook effectively. Christina also supported this idea.

Some pupils supported the importance of this factor for effecting schooling reporting that the textbook supports teachers and pupils’ role.

“I agree that it is very important to have quality textbooks because we need textbooks that are interesting, that explain the things that we have to learn well.”

You believe that you won’t learn so much without quality textbooks?

“I believe that without good textbooks the lesson won’t be so good and we will not be helped.”

(Andreas)

Most pupils expressed a different idea about the role of quality textbooks. The common characteristic of their definition was the fact that nothing was more important than teachers and if you do not have “good” teachers you would not have effective schooling. Emphasis was placed on the role of teachers and the use of the textbook.

“I do not see how it is important to have good (quality) textbooks or not because it depends how you use a textbook and not what the textbook is.”

(Georgia)

“We need good (quality) books to illustrate the lesson better and to be interesting. But I believe that the teacher is more important because if we do not have good teachers then what can you do with quality books.”

(Haris)

8.3.1.2. Context Level-The two factors with the least importance:

Parents identified factor 1.2 (The financial support/per pupil expenditure). The interviewees supported this identification (P, 4:1:0). It was surprising that they underestimated this factor because in Cyprus the Parents Association of each school tries to gather as much money as they can to support the school financially. On the other hand they justified their position by saying that from the moment there was a basic and acceptable level of quality in the school building, its resources, and in the equipment, financial support alone would not bring effectiveness, but people would.

“Although I find it surprising for parents because we know that each schools’ Parents Association tries to financially support in every possible way, I agree with this factor. I believe that people are more important.”

(Costas)

“I agree with this factor because people are more important than money, but it is very surprising to see it here because parents found the factor 1.10 (The building maintenance and the resources of the school) important.”

(Doros)

Factor 1.4 (The inspectors’ support on everyday school work) was identified by the three samples as one with the least importance. The interviewees supported this belief (T, 4:1:0) (P,

4:1:0) (Pu, 4:1:2). Studying their discussion one can identify three common factors: (a) The present educational system does not allow inspectors to implement a supportive role, (b) There is an ambiguity in the role of the inspectors because they evaluate teachers for promotion and at the same time are expected to support teachers, and (c) The number of inspectors is limited and every inspector has to inspect too many teachers.

“I agree with the factor because as it is today in our system, the inspector’s support is limited, almost nonexistent”.

(Levki)

One can read the disappointment that Levki felt about the role of the inspector in the school. The teacher felt that the inspector did not support her schoolwork. Her feelings were common in most teachers. Studying Viki’s opinion one can see that she felt the same and she agreed with Levki’s opinion by saying:

“As the system is it does not help because the role of the inspector is not the right one. It is not as it should be...by coming 4-5 times a year to school what can he/she offer? He/she should come at least once a week; as often as he/she can in order to help and support teachers”.

(Viki)

In addition, Haris argued that:

“I agree with this factor because the inspector comes to the class only a few times a year and he/she just evaluates the teacher without helping the class in the everyday school work”.

The pupils identified the factor 1.5 (The school size). They had different beliefs (Pu, 2:2:3). Some of them believed that it was not important for SE because it did not influence pupils’ progress. Some of them believed that it was important because a large school would not have the same impact as a small school, and finally some of them did not hold any strong beliefs.

Georgia supported the belief that this factor was not important. She based her assumption on the opinion that people can make the difference in a school:

“I believe that this factor is not important because the number of pupils and teachers cannot play any role in school effectiveness. If the school has good teachers then it does not matter how large the school is.”

(Georgia)

On the other hand, Gloria had a different opinion reporting that a large school might cause organizational problems:

“I disagree with this factor because if the school is large, it has too many pupils and few teachers, then it will cause many problems. Also, if there are too many people in the school there will be too much noise, confusion...it won't be good for us, the atmosphere won't be good.”

(Gloria)

The factor 1.12 (The teachers' evaluation system) was identified only by the teachers. The interviewees supported this factor (T, 4:1:0). Almost all teachers had a common belief: the teachers' evaluation system was not important for SE because the teachers did not work effectively due to the evaluation system. Asking teachers why they believed so showed that mature teachers would not be motivated to work more effectively than they already do. Christina felt that evaluation will not bring SE. Teachers did not work harder or more effectively because they would be evaluated, but because they were professionals and their status demanded them to do so.

“I agree with the 1.12 factor because the teachers' evaluation system won't play any role a mature teacher. In other words, he/she won't work because he/she will be evaluated. If you are a qualified teacher then you do not need the inspector to evaluate you in order to work effectively”.

(Christina)

“The evaluation process is part of the educational system; is part of any other system. But I believe that in an effective school the evaluation system of teachers does not matter. The teachers won't be more effective due to any evaluation process.”

(Peter)

8.3.1.3. Context Level-Conclusions:

Summarising the discussion of the Context Level, one can come to some conclusions about the most important factors that lead to SE:

1. The three sample groups had the same opinions on the issue of the quality of the textbooks and a common belief: quality textbooks are important to support the role of teachers, parents and pupils and to help the curriculum consumption effectively. Teachers gave more attention to the role of textbooks in giving security and guidance to the teacher, to his/her lesson and to the everyday class work. Parents gave more attention to the role of textbooks in supporting parents when they assist their children and to know at any time the curriculum consumption. Finally, the pupils gave more attention to the role of textbooks in supporting the teacher in his/her lessons.
2. The parents and pupils shared two beliefs on the building maintenance and the resources of the school factor. Some expressed the belief that nothing was more important than people in SE. On the other hand, some expressed the belief that a well designed school with an attractive appearance and environment, good functioning of classrooms, halls et cetera made people feel good and psychologically empowered them.
3. The teachers believed that the time pupils spend at school is not enough for their development and that parents must support their children in order to develop their personality, abilities and skills. In addition, one must take into account pupils' home background factors in order to improve their progress.

8.3.2. School Level:

The interviewees were asked to discuss and analyse the two most important and the two characteristics with the least importance at the school level as the various stakeholders identified those in the questionnaire.

8.3.2.1. School Level-The two most important factors:

The Parents and pupils identified factor 2.2 (Leader and teacher co-operation). The interviewees strongly supported the importance of this factor (P, 5:0:0) (Pu, 6:1:0). There was a very strong belief that the cooperation of the leader and teachers was essential for SE because their relations would have an impact on class work and on pupils' learning. Viki reported that:

"I strongly agree with this factor because from here we can conclude that it is very important the leader-teachers cooperation due to the impact that it will have on pupils' learning."

How will that impact on pupils' learning?

"If their relations are supportive and mutual then this good climate will influence teachers' attitude to the classroom."

(Viki)

In addition, Georgia reported that:

"If the headteacher does not cooperate well with the teachers then he/she will not give too much attention to school, the teachers will be angry with the headteacher and that will be shown in the classroom, he/she will be angry with us. Without their cooperation there won't be a good climate."

The need for cooperation was also important to the commitment that someone was making to work for a specific policy, the responsibility to implement specific tasks:

"Surely this factor is essential for the smooth functioning of the school. If the headteacher does not have good relations with his/her staff then this will have a negative impact on the children and the staff...generally on the schools' functioning. They will say "this is not my responsibility, it is others' responsibility" and no work will be done."

(Nicos)

The three sample groups identified the factor 2.6 (A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils). The interviewees strongly supported this position (T, 3:1:1) (P, 4:0:1) (Pu, 7:0:0). The belief that pupils must feel safe at school and in the classroom under which they will be able to study was common to most interviewees. The analysis showed that this factor was justified by

common positions for the three samples. Although this factor was expected for pupils and the parents, it was not surprising for teachers to report because as professionals they would be interested in creating a safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils:

“The teachers believe in a safe and orderly atmosphere for the pupils. The reason they come to this factor is because it is very important for the pupils to feel safe and trust first their teachers, and the climate of the classroom, to feel equivalent with the same opportunities in a creative and positive climate in order to develop their skills. The teachers recognise this factor because through various issues, where the atmosphere is not positive, some pupils are underachievers.”

(Marios)

Georgia felt that it was very important for pupils to feel safe:

“I agree that the safe and positive atmosphere for the pupils is essential because the pupil may be afraid to come to school if he/she does not feel safe and if he/she is not psychologically ready neither the lesson nor to his/her relations with the other pupils will be ok. He/she will feel alone. But if there was a safe and positive climate in school, the things will be different and there would be a positive and safe climate into the classroom.”

Costas added the issue of understanding parents' feelings:

“Factor 2.6 is expected to be one of the most important factors not only for teachers. It is a factor that may improve teachers' and pupils' results; it may assist their work. On the other hand it is very important for us as parents because it makes us feel comfortable that at the time we are at work and our children are at school, they are safe and they feel safe and happy in a positive atmosphere.”

Even though Christina recognised this factor as important, she underlined that it was not possible for this factor to exist if factor 2.2 was not found in a school. She also discussed factor 2.7, which was found to be important by the teachers. The interviewees supported this finding (T, 4:1:0).

“How is it possible to have factor 2.6 (and 2.7) if 2.2 does not exist? I disagree because if there is honest cooperation between the headteacher and the teachers then this positive climate is transmitted to the pupils. If I cooperate with my headteacher then we can exchange views in a positive climate. I believe that factor 2.2 is very important. I believe that recognising factor 2.7 is like saying “I can create a positive and safe climate for my pupils, I can get on well with my colleagues if I want it”. This is possible only if “we” cooperate and not “I”. If the pupils see that all parties are cooperative they will say “look our teachers

cooperate, they get on so well, they help each other, they are very kind to each other so we will do the same". There is a teachers' society and a pupils' society; there is a way to transfer the climate from one society to the other. The climate that is shared between the staff plays a huge role in the school."

(Christina)

The teachers that supported factor 2.7 underlined the fact that teachers must feel safe in their working place.

"I agree with factor 2.7 because if the teacher does not feel safe in a positive climate in his/her school then he/she will not work efficiently and effectively at the level he/she would like to work because he/she will not be focused on his/her work. This will have a negative impact on him/her."

(Elias)

"Teachers recognise factor 2.7 because many times they do not feel safe in their school due to the "invasion" of parents in school work and the problems that they cause them. Teachers must feel safe to work effectively."

(Levki)

8.3.2.2. School Level-The two factors with the least importance:

Factor 2.9 (The culture of the school) was recognised by the parents as one of the least important. The interviewees did not share a common understanding on this issue (P, 2:2:1). By investigating their beliefs, it was found that some interviewees expressed opinions about the climate, atmosphere, and the ethos rather than the culture of the school. Those that were referring to the culture believed that it was not important. On the other hand, those that were referring to the climate or the ethos of the school believed that it was not one of the factors of least importance.

Some interviewees agreed that this factor was not important:

"You see there are more important factors than the culture of the school. The cooperation of the teachers, the understanding between them. I feel that this factor is no important because each teacher is responsible for his/her actions and not the culture of the school."

(Thalia)

Those who disagreed with this position believed that this factor was very much important because the culture of the school determined the actions of the people:

“The culture of the school, the environment of the school, the atmosphere that is created e.g. to love our school, our teachers, the cooperation, all these create the culture...they are very important. I disagree that factor 2.9 is not important and is considered to be one of the least important.”

(Doros)

“I disagree that this factor is not important because I believe that the culture of the school is important; especially the culture of the teachers. This has an impact on the whole functioning of school and on pupils’ behavior. If there is a good culture, this cooperation will be transmitted to all stakeholders, to parents, to pupils.”

(Viki)

The teachers and pupils identified factor 2.10 (Common strategies and behaviors in classroom teaching) as one of those of the least importance. Most interviewees disagreed with this position (T, 1:4:0) (Pu, 2:2:3). Their disagreement was based on the assumption that common strategies and behaviours in the classroom lead to common understanding:

“I believe that this factor is very important because without having common strategies in the school, how is it possible to be effective if we talk or not and give attention and importance to different things? We must have common strategies and behaviors.”

(Elias)

“I disagree with this position because the common strategies play an important role for the success or not of the school in issues like discipline, behavior. We must have a common policy and strategy in some issues of school work.”

(Christina)

“I think that 2.10 is very important because if the teachers act differently about the same issues, then that means that the pupils will act differently.”

(Andreas)

The interviewees that agreed with this position believed that the teaching profession is very isolated and teachers act according to their understanding, ideas, beliefs:

“I agree with this factor because we might have some common strategies and behaviors in the classroom but the teachers tend to work alone, to act according to their own beliefs. It is the nature of the work; different pupils different actions.”

(Marios)

The three sample groups recognised Factor 2.11 (School's links with the wider community contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development). The interviewees showed that they did not hold strong beliefs about this factor (T, 1:3:1) (P, 1:2:2) (Pu, 1:0:6). The people who supported this factor believed that the school must have strong links with the community because it is part of the community and pupils are members of the community.

“2.11 is very important because the school is part of the community and prepares pupils for the society and the community. The school must empower its links with the community; the school must be open to the community. Maybe the teachers that disagree with this factor have some fear that the community will involve to their work.”

(Elias)

“I am wondering about factor 2.11 because the school in a community, maybe is the most alive organization...not only must it have communication and cooperation with the community but in general it must be involved in the life of the community. It is strange because the parents should ask the school to play a role in the community.”

(Costas)

On the other hand Marios agreed that this factor was not important because:

“In the previous decades this factor was very important because the school was the center of the community and the cultural activities, but nowadays the school is more isolated from the community, wrong maybe, but that's the way it is, especially in towns.”

(Marios)

Almost all pupils shared a belief that this factor was neutral for SE because the school was largely an organization independent from the life of a community:

“Our teachers work on their own in the school and the pupils do not have any relations during the period they are in school with the community. We might visit some places but that is all.”

(Elina)

“I believe that this factor sometimes is important and sometimes is not. Sometimes we do things in our community, but most times we do not visit any places.”

What do you mean by saying that you do things?

“We visit museums, galleries, factories, parks that are in our community and we study things.”

(Gloria)

8.3.2.3. School Level-Conclusions:

Summarising the results of the discussion of the school level one can come to some conclusions about the most important factors that lead to SE:

1. The Parents and pupils' have a common belief about the issue of leader and teacher co-operation. There was a very strong belief that the cooperation of the leader and teachers was essential for SE because their relations would have an impact on class work and on pupils' learning. The need for cooperation was also important in the commitment that someone was making to work for a specific policy, the responsibility to implement specific tasks.
2. The three sample groups believed that a safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils was very important for SE because pupils must feel safe at school and in the classroom.

8.3.3. Classroom Level:

The interviewees were asked to discuss and analyse the two most important and the two factors with the least importance at the classroom level as the various stakeholders identified those in the questionnaire.

8.3.3.1. Classroom Level-The two most important factors:

The parents and pupils, identified factor 3.1 (Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils) as one of the most important. The interviewees supported these findings (P, 2:2:1) (Pu, 6:0:1). Looking at their discussion one can recognise a common

factor that the interviewees reported to support their position: pupils go to school to learn and the teaching procedure must be focused on classroom methods that will provide effectiveness.

“Parents know that the reason their child goes to school is to learn...so logically they chose factor 3.1 hoping that the classroom teaching will maintain motivation and challenge for their children, so that emphasis will be given to pupils learning.”

(Costas)

“Really, a pupil must be interested, must feel happy and the lesson must be enjoyable for them so that he/she will learn. Whatever method the classroom teacher uses in his/her lesson it won't be effective if the pupil is not motivated to actively participate in it. If the teacher succeeds in challenging and motivating, then the pupil might learn.”

(Nicos)

“I agree with this factor because if the lessons are not clearly structured and do not provide any motivation for us then we will not be able to understand the lesson and be interested in learning.”

(Andreas)

Some interviewees disagreed with this position because they believed that this factor was giving emphasis only to knowledge and not to the whole personality of the pupil:

“This factor gives emphasis only to knowledge and nothing else. I disagree. Parents give more attention to the knowledge, only to knowledge without giving attention to anything else; to the personality of each pupil and to the development of all their skills, abilities, communication with other pupils et cetera.”

(Viki)

The teachers and parents identified factor 3.2 (The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident). The interviewees strongly supported this finding (T, 4:1:0) (P, 5:0:0). They based their position on the assumption that if people did not feel safe and secure in their working place, they would not feel confident to work effectively.

“This factor is very important for pupils because they need to feel secure and safe in order to be able to express themselves freely with confidence. If they are afraid of their teacher, then they will not actively participate in the learning process”

(Elias)

“Emotionally it is very important for children to feel secure in any place they are. When the children are at school it is very important for them to be in a safe environment, a positive atmosphere with confident, quiet and secure circumstances.”

(Viki)

“The classroom must have a safe and quiet environment. That will help us to learn because we will feel that whatever our achievements are our teacher will not shout at us and our classmates will not laugh at us.”

(George)

The teachers identified factor 3.14 (The class size). The interviewees did not support this position (T, 1:3:1) even though in their answers they set a precondition: the discussion about class size did not include extreme situations. Knowing that in Cypriot primary education the maximum number of pupils in a classroom is 30, the teachers underlined the fact that a number less than 30 was satisfactory, even though a lower number would be better:

“Surely the class size influences the teaching procedure and determines pupils’ achievements but not in numbers like those we have in our schools. Even though I believe it is a factor that can determine pupils’ achievements, on the other hand I believe that it is not one of the most important factors. Probably teachers chose this factor because it has to do with the pressure of the curriculum and the other demands of the class work, which at the end are influenced by the class size. The complexity of the class work makes teaching difficult because at the end the number of pupils will influence teachers’ effectiveness and his/her role.”

(Marios)

The teacher that agreed with this factor stated that:

“The class size is very important because if we have small numbers of pupils in our classrooms, we will have more time to help every pupil. With large numbers of pupils it is more difficult; not to teach but to support pupils.”

(Haris)

The pupils identified factor 3.18 (The teacher provides opportunities to contribute to pupils’ development-personal, spiritual, moral, social et cetera). The interviewees strongly supported this recognition (Pu, 6:0:1). Their common belief was based on the assumption that the school is not about knowledge only but also much more:

“The school must not give us only knowledge. We want to talk about our problems, about our thoughts. We need to learn about things that will help us.”

What do you mean?

“Well, to talk about people, to express our feelings, to learn not only knowledge...”

(Elina)

“Every child must have opportunities to learn many things at school but not only knowledge. He/She must have opportunities to play and to cooperate with his classmates, to feel nice, to learn about his/her feelings...I like the time when our teachers ask us to express our feelings about specific issues.”

(Haris)

8.3.3.2. Classroom Level-The two factors with the least importance:

The parents identified factor 3.13 (The system of rewards and punishments used by the teacher). The interviewees were rather neutral to this factor because according to their understanding there was an ambiguity in the term “rewards and punishments” (P, 0:2:3):

“Most parents lived in a period where the parents and the teachers very often used force to punish their children. So they feel that punishment is not appropriate for their children neglecting that punishment does not mean to use force. On the other hand, they feel that there is not any satisfactory reward that will motivate pupils because people today have everything.”

(Costas)

Two parents disagreed that this factor was not important because the pupils must be motivated to work harder by rewards and on the other hand must be punished when they do things that are not appropriate:

“It is strange that the parents do not see this factor as important. Aren't parents interested in the way that the teacher behaves in the classroom? Surely we must have punishments in school and the classroom, as we must have rewards to motivate pupils. We must have a system of both.”

(Viki)

The pupils identified factor 3.14 (The class size). The interviewees did not have a common belief on this issue (Pu, 2:2:3) but they argued that the class size was important only if we were talking about extremely large numbers.

“I think that the class size plays an important role because it is difficult to have thirty five to forty pupils in a classroom. Pupils cannot learn in the same way, some will learn more and some will learn less. But with twenty pupils in a classroom the things will be different...the pupils should identify this factor as important.”

(Andreas)

“I agree that this factor is not so important because if a pupil wants to learn he/she will be careful in the classroom with twenty or thirty pupils. Of course we are not talking about having forty pupils in the classroom.”

(Elina)

The teachers identified factor 3.16 (The teacher displays pupils' work). The interviewees supported this position (T, 4:1:0). A common belief existed in interviewees' discussion: the way teachers displayed pupils' work did not support and empower pupils.

“I agree with this position because the children do not improve their work and are not influenced by their classmates work. Maybe in some cases they will be emotionally empowered, but not so much as we want.”

(Elias)

“I agree with this factor because in the ways that we use the issue of displaying pupils work in the classroom, I do not believe is important. Maybe if we use different ways of displaying pupils' work to change things, but as it is today some things must change.”

(Peter)

The three sample groups identified factor 3.20 (The teacher's experience). The interviewees supported this position (T, 3:1:1) (P, 5:0:0) (Pu, 4:1:2) by giving three common beliefs on this issue: 1. The quality of the teachers and their pedagogical education was more important than their length of teaching experience, 2. The personality of the teachers determines their quality and 3. The length of teaching experience was important only if factor one and two were the same; in other words only if two “teachers are equal” then the teaching experience would come in to play.

“The teaching experience is not so important if the teachers are not the same. There are situations where young teachers work harder and more effectively than older ones. Of course we may find older teachers to be more effective than younger ones but that is not because they have teaching experience but due to their personality.”

(Levki)

“I agree with factor 3.20 because I believe that the new teachers are more successful than the old ones because they come into the profession with new ideas, beliefs, methods. I do not see the issue as “experience or not” but as an issue of knowledge, new approaches, new philosophy. Of course the experience can play its role but above all is the teacher, his/her education and then his/her teaching experience. Surely we would prefer an effective teacher with teaching experience but not a teacher that has teaching experience and not the other preconditions.”

(Doros)

“If the teacher is “good” it does not matter how many years of teaching experience he/she has. Our teacher is very good but he has very few years of teaching experience.”

(Elina)

8.3.3.3. Classroom-Conclusions:

Summarising the results of the discussion one can conclude the most important factors that lead to SE are as follows:

1. Parents and pupils believed that clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils determine TE. They believed that pupils go to school to learn and the teaching procedure must be focused on classroom methods that will provide TE.
2. The teachers and parents believed that the establishment of a safe and quiet environment, which supported learning and in which pupils felt secure and confident was very important for SE. They based their identification on the assumption that if a person does not feel safe and secure in his/her working place he/she won't feel confident to work effectively.
3. Teachers had the opinion that the class size might not be important for SE. Knowing that in Cypriot primary education the maximum number of pupils in a classroom is 30, the teachers underlined the fact that a number less than 30 is satisfactory.
4. Pupils believed that teachers needed to provide opportunities to contribute to pupils' development-personal, spiritual, moral, social et cetera.

8.3.4. Pupils Level:

The interviewees were asked to discuss and analyse the two most important and the two characteristics with the least importance at the pupil level as the various stakeholders identified those in the questionnaire.

8.3.4.1. Pupils Level-The two most important factors:

The three sample groups identified the factor 4.3 (Pupils' encouragement to reach their maximum potential). The interviewees strongly supported this belief (T, 5:0:0) (P, 5:0:0) (Pu, 7:0:0) based on three common themes: (a) The encouragement of pupils was an obligation of the teacher, (b) The pupils must be motivated to reach their maximum potential and (c) SE was connected with the commitment of teacher and pupil to work hard.

“Factor 4.3 is very important. We must support each pupil to reach his/her maximum potential. For that reason we must have high expectations of our pupils so that we can succeed a percentage of these goals because if we ask for the minimum from our pupils, we will succeed less than the minimum.”

(Marios)

“This factor really it is an additional quality of the teacher to see his/her pupils potential, to see every pupil's potential and in proportion with their needs to support and help him/her to reach his/her maximum potential. Here, this issue depends on the ability of the teacher, if the teacher has the ability, and they will because in some cases the teacher does not find any cooperation from his/her pupils and he/she might be disappointed then he/she will stop trying. He/she must have patience and give continuous support to his/her pupils.”

(Nicos)

“I believe that this factor is very important. The teacher must encourage and support pupils because if he/she says that they can succeed, they can do better then the pupils will say “I can, I can do better” and they will try hard to learn.”

(Georgia)

The parents identified factor 4.4 (Pupils' motivation by the teacher). The interviewees supported this finding (P, 3:0:2) believing that if pupils were not ready or willing to work hard

they would not achieve what they could. For that reason the role of teachers was very important to motivate their pupils to work harder.

“If a pupil has no motivation to work harder then he/she cannot achieve many things. The teacher must support his/her pupils.”

(Thalia)

“The motivation of pupils by the teacher is very important. Only in this way is it possible to stimulate pupils to work harder, to continue their efforts in all lessons to achieve their best. By motivating each pupil is like making the pupil compete with him/herself and not his/her classmates.”

(Doros)

The teachers and pupils identified factor 4.8 (Pupils’ opportunity to learn). The interviewees supported these findings (T, 3:1:1) (Pu, 5:1:1). There was a common theme in their answers: they supported the belief that every pupil must have the opportunity to learn according to his/her ability and skills. The teachers must provide this opportunity for every pupil in the classroom and respect every pupil’s personality.

“I believe that 4.8 is very important because the teacher must provide the opportunity to all his/her pupils to learn. They must have equal opportunities to achieve their best even though the odds are against them.”

What do you mean by equal opportunities?

“I mean that the teacher must/should adjust his/her lessons, goals according to each pupil so that every pupil will have the opportunity to learn according to his/her abilities and skills.”

(Elias)

“I agree with this factor because all the pupils must have the same opportunities to learn. Some pupils learn faster, easier than others. The teacher must help them to learn as the others do. If the pupil does not want to learn, it is his/her problem.”

(Georgia)

Peter did not support this factor because according to his understanding, from the moment that the teacher encouraged each pupil to reach his/her maximum potential, it meant that he/she gave them equal opportunities to learn:

“I disagree with this factor because from the moment that the teacher works like a professional and encourages all his/her pupils to reach their maximum potentials as that was recognised by factor 4.3, it means that he/she gives equal opportunities to all his/her pupils to achieve their best.”

(Peter)

8.3.4.2. Pupils Level-The factors with the least importance:

Pupils recognised factor 4.1 (Pupils’ positive behaviour at school and classroom). The interviewees strongly disagreed with this position (Pu, 0:6:1). They believed that it was not possible for someone to learn if he/she did not have positive behaviour at school, and in the classroom and did not participate in classroom lessons.

“I believe that as good as a teacher might be, if the pupil does not want to learn he/she won’t learn. I disagree that this factor is not important.”

(Haris)

“I do not agree with this recognition because if we are not interested in our school and classroom, our lessons then how will we learn? If a child does not behave positively in school then this will cause problems to him/herself and to his/her classmates. He/she might also be in trouble (e.g. make a noise in the classroom, bother his/her classmates).”

(Andreas)

Teachers recognised factor 4.2 (Pupils’ everyday help and support by the teacher). The interviewees supported this finding (T, 4:1:0). They supported their belief on the assumption that it was not possible to help and support each pupil on the same basis due to the demands of the school work.

“To have every day face to face contact of teacher-pupil then this is impossible to be done due to the school schedule, the curriculum, the number of pupils in the classroom, the demands of each lesson et cetera. Usually we help pupils in some cases and maybe a specific group of pupils. On the other hand, I believe that we provide and establish such an atmosphere in the classroom and to groups where each pupil is being helped without needing personal, face to face contact.”

(Marios)

“This factor is very important for pupils because they are children, they need attention, love and support. On the other hand, I believe that it is very difficult to

support and help each pupil every day because we do not have the time to do so. The curriculum presses us to work faster than what we want to. I believe that we do our best.”

(Levki)

Teachers and parents identified factor 4.5 (Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations from themselves). The interviewees strongly disagreed with this position (T, 1:4:0) (P, 0:5:0). They based their argument on the belief that if the pupils did not feel self-esteem and did not have high expectations of themselves then they would not be committed to work hard to achieve their best.

“I disagree with this recognition because I believe that this factor is one of the most important for effective schooling because there is not any way to force pupils to learn if they are not willing to work hard and to believe in their abilities and personality. It is very strange...maybe the word “high” mislead them in understanding that “high” means more pressure than the pupil can handle.”

(Peter)

“It is very strange to see this factor in this Table. I believe it is very important. Maybe the term “high self-esteem and expectations” mislead parents. Probably they connected the word “high” with the word “pressure” because it is very common in our heads that if you want high results you need to press things...Parents do not want to press their children. But I believe that if you want to achieve your best you must have high self-esteem and high expectations; you must believe in yourself and your abilities.”

(Costas)

“I recognise factor 4.5 as very important because in this way the pupil is actively engaged in the learning process with his/her teacher. If the pupil has high self-esteem and expectations from him/herself, the teacher will be able to use this to support his/her learning.”

(Doros)

The parents identified factor 4.6 (The use of pupils' achievements in school work). The interviewees supported this position (P, 3:1:1). They based their recognition on the assumption that the teacher could use others methods and approaches to support pupils work.

“I agree with this recognition because I believe that there are other methods to support pupils’ work and not to use their achievements. How will they be used if their achievements are not good? In some cases, maybe we can use them but not for all pupils. We must support pupils using other methods and approaches like the personal contact, in their everyday work.”

(Costas)

Maria saw this factor as very important because in this way the teacher supported pupils’ work:

“This factor is very important. We must support pupils by using their achievements in schoolwork. This will support them to build their self-esteem and to believe in themselves; this is the best way to build their self-esteem because we acknowledge to the pupil his/her achievements and he/she gets direct reinforcement.”

(Viki)

The pupils identified factor 4.7 (Emphasis on pupils’ meta-cognitive skills). The interviewees did not have a common belief on this issue (Pu, 2:2:3). Some pupils agreed with this factor, some disagreed and some did not have a clear opinion on this. This issue was not clear because the term “meta-cognitive skills” was a difficult concept to understand, especially for pupils although no problem of understanding appeared during the questionnaire piloting or distribution.

“I agree with this factor because if we know methods that can help us to learn then we will learn effectively. In addition, in this way we will be responsible for our learning.”

(Gloria)

“The teacher must help us to learn. We can learn some things by ourselves but we need out teacher to explain them us. I do not agree with this factor. The teacher must help us to learn.”

(George)

“I do not have a clear opinion because some things we can learn by ourselves but others our teacher must explain to us.”

(Evi)

8.3.4.3. Pupils’ Level-Conclusions:

Summarising the results of the discussion of the pupils level, one can come to some conclusions about the most important factors for SE:

1. The three sample groups believed pupils' encouragement to reach their maximum potential was a very important factor for SE.
2. The parents believed pupils' motivation by the teacher was a very important factor especially in cases where pupils were not ready or willing to work hard to achieve their best.
3. The teachers and pupils believed pupils should have the opportunity to learn according to their ability and skills and the teachers should provide this opportunity in the classroom with respect to every pupil's personality.

8.3.5. Which school could be described as effective according to your understanding?

The interviewees were asked to give their understanding of the term SE; to give their definition of the term; to give factors/characteristics that could be recognised in an effective school. Three common themes were reported by most interviewees: First, the atmosphere of the school was very important (T, 4:0:1) (P, 4:0:1) (Pu, 2:4:1), second the need to have quality teachers ("professionals"), committed to their work (T, 3:0:2) (P, 4:0:1) (Pu, 5:0:2) and third the need for cooperation within the school between the people that interact and exchange ideas building a common understanding (T, 4:0:1) (P, 3:1:1) (Pu, 5:1:1).

"I believe that the most important factor is people, the teacher and the pupil. The pupil is responsible to motivate him/herself to achieve his/her best. On the other hand, the teacher is more important because according to his personality and the organization, the atmosphere and the ethos of the school he/she will be able to achieve high goals and make his/her school effective."

(Doros)

"The effective school is the school that achieves its goals through common understanding, an appropriate climate and atmosphere, cooperation and communication between its members."

(Marios)

"The effective school is the school where attention is given to "We" and not to "I". People are interested in the school and not just in their classroom. Above all is the school. That is why the atmosphere and the climate of the school are very important factors."

(Christina)

Viki supported the previous references and the need for a positive atmosphere and quality teachers. She believed that a combination of these two is very important:

“The effective school, in my opinion is the school that can offer the right curriculum to the pupils in the right way with the right methods. In addition, the school that will develop the whole personality of the pupils, emotionally, spiritual et cetera. All these can be achieved only if we have good teachers and the right atmosphere in the school.”

(Viki)

The pupils' definitions gave more attention to the teacher factor; the need to have a “good” teacher, a quality teacher that has the knowledge and the personality to work hard. This recognition of pupils did not mean that pupils believed that the atmosphere and the culture of the school were not important, but because it was easier for pupils to recognise this need due to their everyday contact with their teacher.

“An effective school is the school that has good teachers, which are interested in and care about their pupils and their classroom.”

(Evi)

“I believe that the effective school is one that has good teachers; experienced teachers so that they know what they are doing... The teachers are good and are interested in their pupils.”

(Georgia)

“In an effective school the environment of the school is very important because the pupils must feel comfortable and to be satisfied with their school. In addition, the teachers must be good and help their pupils; to have the necessary behavior in the classroom.”

(Gloria)

8.3.6. Do you have a development plan in your school?

Only teachers and parents answered this question because it referred to specific educational issues that the pupils would have difficulties understanding. In the questionnaire the majority of the teachers' (81%) and parents' sample (66,7%) answered that they did not have a development plan in their school. The interviewees agreed with this (T, 4:1:0) (P, 5:0:0). Only

one teacher reported that the school had a development plan, and this was an innovation: the implementation of an environmental program in schools.

8.3.7. Do you need a development plan in your school?

Only teachers and parents answered this question because it referred to specific educational issues. In the questionnaire, 52,8% of the teachers' sample answered that they did not need a development plan in their school. On the other hand, the interviewees believed that they needed a development plan in their school (T, 1:4:0). The majority of the parents (80,3%) answered that they needed a development plan in their school and the interviewees supported this (P, 4:1:0).

The interviewees sample groups were asked to describe the development plan that the school needed. They gave some ideas: environment and ecology, problem solving in mathematics, cooperative learning, learning in groups.

8.3.8. IN-SET programmes: their role in school improvement and development:

Only teachers answered this question because it referred to specific educational issues. In the questionnaire the majority of the sample groups, had a strong belief that the IN-SET programmes were essential for all professions. In the same questions both teachers (98,1%) and parents (96,5%), answered that the IN-SET programmes help teachers to improve and develop their school. The interviewees strongly supported this belief (T, 5:0:0). They reported that IN-SET programmes help and support teachers to improve their work and give specific directions that can be applied to the school to improve the class work.

"I believe very much in the IN-SET programmes. I believe that sometimes they are even better than a M.A. because the IN-SET programmes can be focused on the everyday schoolwork and support teachers. I believe that the participation in such programmes supports teachers. This is also my personal experience."

(Peter)

“I consider these programmes as very important especially if these are structured according to teachers’ needs. Generally I believe that the IN-SET programmes are an essential part of every teacher’s work. It would be useful if the IN-SET programmes were organised at schools in regular times.”

(Christina)

8.3.9. IN-SET programmes: their role in SE:

Only teachers were asked to answered this question (Do you believe that an IN-SET programme about SE would help you to improve your school? Would you be interested in participating in such a programme?). The teachers believed that such a program would be useful (T, 4:1:0). According to their discussion, it would give the chance to teachers to search for their SE.

“A SE IN-SET program would be very useful because it would give us the chance to recognise our needs for effectiveness and take actions for school improvement. Of course the program should be very organised...I would be interested in participating in such a program.”

(Elias)

“Surely it would help our school to be more effective. The theories, the thoughts, the knowledge of the SE tradition should be structured in an IN-SET program and it would help a lot...Of course I would be interested in participating...”

(Peter)

Marios disagreed with the need and purpose of such a program because, as he reported, the concept of effectiveness was not simple but much more complicated.

“No, I believe that it would not be useful. Not because I believe that it is not right to do such a program but because the issue of SE is not within the area of teachers...The teachers know what is needed for a school to be effective...first we must change the negative factors of the system. This kind of program is essential for the headteachers; he/she is responsible to create the atmosphere of the school. The teacher may reach effectiveness up to a point...”

(Marios)

8.3.10. “What I believe about my school”:

The interviewees were asked to discuss Table 16 and 17 of the questionnaire where the samples were asked to report their understanding of their school. In addition, they were asked

to discuss anything else they wanted about their school. The three samples were very positive in their beliefs about their school. They believed that their school could be improved and all had something to contribute. They also believe that an IN-SET program about SE would be very useful.

8.4. Summarising

In this chapter a discussion and analysis of the interviews data has been provided. The qualitative data were investigated in depth in order to explore the interviewees' views. The analysis showed that the interviewees did not agree with all the factors that were recognised in the questionnaire. In the next chapter all the research data are discussed.

CHAPTER 9. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

9.1. Introduction

During the last two decades people's concern was focus on SE and accountability of schoolwork. Although these issues are not synonymous they are connected; they interact and the one completes the other. SE has to do with the level of success of schoolwork (how far each school achieves its goals; how efficient the school is) and with the development and the achievements of every pupil taking into account their home background. Accountability has to do with the results and the achievements that each school, teacher, pupil and governor produces and presents to all stakeholders and to the public in general. In other words the school, teacher, pupil and governor report their results and account for all their actions and effectiveness to the public.

Researching people's views and understanding SE and the factors that could lead to SE are issues that focus the interest of stakeholders in schooling. In the last decade there was a considerable number of studies that inquire to report the opinions and understanding of parents (McGrew and Gilman, 1991; Goldring and Shapira, 1993; Dauber and Epstein, 1989) and pupils (Karatzias et al., 2001; Benjamin & Hollings, 1995) about SE because it was recognised that the interact of all interested parties in schooling was essential. But if different ideas, opinions, and understandings exist among the stakeholders then it is difficult to have cooperation, common understanding, and common aims. Based on this assumption one can assume that SE studies need to investigate both teachers, headteachers, governors, parents and pupils opinions, beliefs and understanding about SE.

This study researched teachers, parents and pupils perspectives on SE. In this chapter one can read the discussion of questionnaires and interviews findings. The discussion is organised around the seven research questions.

9.2. Research question 1: What are the key factors that contribute to effective schools in Cypriot Primary Education predicated on the opinions of (a) teachers, (b) headteachers and deputy heads, (c) parents, (d) inspectors-governors and (e) pupils?

In the next sections a discussion of the factors, that were recognised as the most important for SE according to the opinions of the three sample groups will take place.

9.2.1. Context Level:

In this section a discussion of the factors of the Context Level that were recognised as the most important for SE according to the opinions of the three sample groups will take place.

9.2.1.1. Factor “The quality of the textbooks”:

The three sample groups identified the factor “*The quality of the textbooks*” as one of the most important factors for effective schooling in this level. After an in depth investigation of this factor it was found that it was considered as very important because it supported the role of teachers, parents and pupils and it helped in the curriculum consumption effectively. Policy-makers in Cyprus and England acknowledged that the mathematics textbooks were particularly influential on curriculum planning (Ministry of Education, 1994; DES, 1991; 1992). Campbell and Kyriakides (2000) who compared The National Curriculum and Standards in Primary Schools in England and Cyprus supported this view. They reported that: “Textbooks (in Cyprus) are designed to reflect the standards set in national curricula, but it does suggest that the nationally expected standards become embodied in teachers’ planning” (Campbell and Kyriakides, 2000, p.389). An example of the weight that was given to the textbooks in Cyprus was the problem that distressed the teachers and the Ministry of Education and Culture during June 2002. The problem publicised when the new books for History were sent to schools and according to the History teachers, some historical events

were interpreted differently and the books should be withdrawn from schools because they would give different directions to the teachers. The authors of the books underlined the fact the historical events can be given different interpretations and it was up to the teacher to use various books in order to search and find proof to support the truth (Politis, 2002).

Each sample group gave its own ideas about how the quality of textbooks supported their role. Teachers felt secure with quality textbooks; they felt that their everyday class work was well supported. So better (quality) textbooks meant better teaching, better learning, and better results. They felt that the curriculum was delivered in the best way, at the right time and to the appropriate amount due to the quality of textbooks. This identification was supported by Kyriakides (1994) who investigated the primary teachers' perceptions of policy for curriculum reform in Cyprus with special reference to mathematics. He found that in Cyprus the teachers relied very heavily upon the textbooks because they prescribed officially what was expected to be covered, how it should be taught and in what time scale. This identification had also to do with the recognition that given the allocated class time and the priorities, teachers rush through the extremely large curriculum that was required in elementary schools, and usually teach only lower order thinking skills, which could be assumed, leads to ineffectiveness. This supported Campbell and Kyriakides (2000) recognition that "Standards set nationally have a weak or unpredictable relationship to actual standards achieved by pupils" (p.393).

The quality of textbooks made parents felt secure that whoever the teacher of their child was, hard worker or not, would deliver the appropriate amount of the curriculum. This showed that parents felt safer about the teaching procedure and learning outcomes of their children when the textbooks were recognised as qualitative without worrying about the "quality of teaching". Quality textbooks were needed in order to support parents when they assisted their children and to know at any time the curriculum consumption.

Finally, pupils felt secure for the same reason as their parents, that whoever their teacher was he/she would deliver the appropriate amount of the curriculum due to the quality of textbooks. They believed that the textbook supports teachers' and pupils' role.

Studies who investigated the role of textbooks in teaching found evidence that even though they supported the importance of textbooks they did not recognise it as panacea for effective schooling. Boersema et al. (2001) researched the role of the content and scope of science books. They found that books contribute more to the knowledge and methodology transfer than in preparing pupils to be responsible citizens, improve their ability to analyse and conceptualise problems in their context and hassle curiosity, a highly necessary academic and research attitude. Adolfsson and Henriksson (1999) supported the previous acknowledgement. They studied the different methods and different results in TIMSS and how the Swedish results in Mathematics vary depending on methodological approach. The analysis of the textbook showed that the contents of the mathematics books vary greatly between countries and most importantly that no clear pattern was discernible when the content of textbooks was related to the results for each country. Some countries had textbooks that emphasised certain subjects more than others, but still perform similarly and some countries had results that corresponded well with the importance of the subjects in their textbooks. Even though the textbooks were very important for effective teaching, on the other hand the textbooks were not panacea. Issues like methodology used, curriculum and textbook content must be investigated.

9.2.1.2. Factor “Parents’ support and assistance to their children’s progress”:

The teachers recognised the factor “*Parents’ support and assistance to their children’s progress*”. Teachers had a common belief on this issue and they believed that parents’ support in pupils’ progress concerned not only support at home, but also in school which had to do

with parents' involvement in school life. Townsend (1997a) in a study about the important factors of an effective school according to the perceptions of teachers in Australia and USA found that in both countries, among the five most important factors was "home-school relations" (positive parent involvement, parents encouragement to support pupils at home). Kyriakides (1997) studied the life of pupils and their attitudes about schools in Cyprus. One of his findings was that the pupils who are having difficulties in their homework were those that did not get support from their parents. The importance of parents as support providers was evident, in many studies (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Reid et al., 1989). Teachers felt that the time pupils spent at school was not enough for all of them to be developed. The teachers shared a common understanding that the parents must support their children in order to develop their personality, abilities and skills. Parents' support had to do with parental involvement in school life. The more involvement there was, the more support children got from their parents. Jowett and Baginsky (1988) in their study on teachers' opinions of the benefits of parental involvement in schools found it to be the most important benefit for the improvement of pupils' achievements. In general, if parental involvement was based on shared goals and cooperation, the benefits were very important and involvement was a positive and a desirable part of school life. Many actions such as raising money, supporting school's resources and helping teachers in classroom activities et cetera were important. Howard and Johnson (2000) in their study about what makes the difference in schools with children with rough lives, teachers supported that "the supportive relationships" within the family, in other words the support of the parents and the whole family determinates the achievements of children.

Parents' support empowers pupils and fulfils them psychological. Concepts like self-esteem, self-concept are strongly correlated with parents' support. Cauce et al., (1990) study about the social support in young children in the USA indicated that support from parents was

related to children's self-esteem. Burnett & Demnar, (1996) in a study about the self-esteem of Australian children aged 8–12 found that it correlated with their degree of closeness to significant others. Other studies showed that parents support was not only important for pupils' educational outcomes such as their achievements but also for children's motivation (Henderson, 1988; Johnson and Walker, 1991).

Various studies even though outside the SE research showed that the involvement of parents in their children's education had long been advocated as integral to positive childhood development and school success (Powell, 1989; US Department of Education, 1994). Positive effects have been found among many other areas in the areas of parent tutoring (Karnes & Zehrback, 1975) and children's reading (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Cowden & Preece, 1989). Many studies found that during the elementary school years parent involvement was very important and had beneficial effects on children's academic achievements (Epstein, 1991; Henderson and Berla, 1994; Johnson and Walker, 1991; Stevenson and Baker 1987).

Teachers' identification also implies that the time pupils spend at school was not enough to develop their personality in all areas (knowledge, emotions, skills, morals et cetera). We must take into account pupils' home background factors in order to improve their progress. Parents have an important role to play in their children's progress and especially in their children's homework. The role of parents can be active in supervising homework or more passive in creating a quiet and positive atmosphere. They can especially play a positive part in advancing homework (Keith et al., 1986; Croonen & Zuylen, 1989; Hong, Milgram, & Perkins, 1995; Rossbach, 1995).

Finally a factor that is very important and determines the level of parental support and involvement is the school's climate. Griffith (1996, 1998) in a study of over 33,000 parents in 122 elementary schools found that school climate affected parental involvement

through empowerment. The study found that if parents perceived their school's climate as positive, they were being empowered by school to increase involvement. The study showed that a school climate characterised by caring for parents as well as students was related to increased parental involvement and support. Chelte et al. (1989) supported this, who found that the school climate could influence the degree to which parents were empowered and involved in school. Many studies emphasised the role of a stimulating school climate, which could generally be recognised as having a supportive atmosphere and a supportive role (Anderson, 1982; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Good and Brophy, 1986; Kreft, 1987).

The teachers' opinions in this study and the literature about parents' support and involvement in schooling showed that this concept was one of the most important issues in present-day education. The importance of parents as support providers was evident in many studies. Although researchers vary in their approaches to the study of parental involvement and support, most agree that parents contribute significantly to SE and to students' success. Therefore, the factors affecting the level and content of parental involvement are of particular importance (Mortimore et al., 1988; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Coleman and LaRocque, 1990; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993; Cotton, 1995; Rosenblatt and Peled, 2002).

9.2.1.3. Factor “The building maintenance and the resources of the school”:

Both parents' and pupils' sample reported as most important the factors “*The building maintenance and the resources of the school*”. In the interviews, the sample groups expressed the belief that a well designed school with an attractive appearance and environment, good functioning of classrooms, halls et cetera makes people feel good and psychologically strengthens them. This view was supported by some studies in Cyprus and by some articles in Cypriot newspapers. Pashiardis (2000) in her research about school climate in elementary and secondary schools based on the views of Cypriot principals and teachers found that the

teachers believed that the schools' facilities did not support the educational aims of the educational system. In addition, they believed that the physical condition of the school itself and its environment (heating, ventilation, acoustics, educational spaces, et cetera) did not create a pleasant atmosphere for students or teachers. Therefore, according to the study there was the need for “urgent improvement for schools so that will become attractive and better equipped” (Pashiardis, 2000, p.233). The Educational Committee of the Cyprus Parliament expressed its worries about the building maintenance and the delays that were revealed in maintaining various school buildings (The Philelepheros, 2002). The Ministry of Education (1990) in a report about the pupils’ failure in schooling among others recognised that school buildings (architecture, room organisation, equipment, resources) were one of the factors, which supported pupils’ failure and must be improved.

Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (1996) in their study about the effect of school resources on student achievements found that school resources were systematically related to student achievements and that these relations were large enough to be educationally important. Levaci and Vignoles (2000) believed that SE research had largely neglected school resources as explanatory factors for student attainment. Borland and Howsen (1996) investigation of the competition, expenditures and student performance in mathematics, found that expenditures were at least marginally related to school performance and marginally significant. A meta-analysis of the effects of differential school inputs on student outcomes performed by Hedges et al. (1994), found that increasing per student expenditures improves test scores. However, Hanushek (1994) pointed out that their meta-analysis was flawed because they omitted many studies that showed increasing expenditures had no effect. Finally, Jacques and Brorsen (2002) investigated the relationship between types of school district expenditures and student performance. They found that schools that spent more on instruction

(teachers, teacher supplies, and teacher training) had higher test scores than those that spent less in those areas.

Despite the strong belief among educators, teachers and parents that expenditure was causally and positively related to student outcomes, the research evidence for this was ambiguous and many studies about school resources and expenditures showed different results (Hanushek, 1986, 1997; Burtless, 1996; Laine et al., 1996). Hanushek (1996) in a study about school resources and student performance found that school expenditures were not related to student performance.

When discussing the issue of resources and the way they support SE or not, it is very important to know the way that the resources of the school are allocated, to know about the ability of management in utilizing the available resources in the most efficient way. Noulas and Ketkar (1998) investigated the efficient utilization of resources in public schools. They support that a school was considered to be efficient if, with the available resources, it achieved the highest possible scores. Thompson, Camp, Horn, and Stewart (1989) linked resource allocations to individual student needs. In terms of future work, the researchers must be very careful so that the research effort will not be wasted in producing unconvincing findings. Criteria such as pupil level performance data, with prior attainment and resource variables at school level are essential to be investigated.

Some parent and pupil interviewees did not support the importance of this factor. They justified their argument on the assumption that nothing was more important than people (teachers, pupils) in an effective school. Actually, their common understanding was based on the assumption that if you have good teachers then the role of the building and its resources comes second. It is well accepted that teachers who know more, teach better. Researchers argue that this apparently simple idea has empowered many attempts to improve education through policy, research and practice, by focusing on what teachers know, or need to know

(Cochram-Smith and Lytle, 1999; Poulson, 2001). Townsend (1997a) reported that “dedicated and qualified staff” (teachers are well trained and show skills of quality teaching) was one of the five most important factors for SE.

An issue that is related to teachers’ ability to teach effectively or not and the need for quality textbooks is the ability and/or the demands of preparing to teach one subject and preparing to teach six and more subjects in primary education. It is therefore clear that some teachers have real problems over subject knowledge, but it is not clear how much this affects their effectiveness. Certainly there are implications for more research for elementary school teaching (Grossman et al., 1989). This issue should be investigated in depth because it can justify why teachers (parents and pupils) recognise the importance of quality books because in this way they will not have to spend much time in preparing all lessons that they will teach in a day because the textbooks in Cyprus clearly prescribe officially what is expected to be covered, how it should be taught and in what time scale. The issue of the “quality” of primary school teachers today seems to worry people in Cyprus (Gagatsis, 2002; POED, 2003).

9.2.2. School Level:

Soteriou et al. (1998) researched the efficiency of secondary schools in Cyprus. One of the major findings was that in the case of Cyprus, room for school efficiency improvement existed, even though not great. Furthermore, they found that no efficiency differences existed which could be attributed solely to the environment. *“This is an important finding for schools in Cyprus, since the efforts towards improvement can now focus on the school level alone”* (Soteriou et al.; 1998, p.72). This research funding implied that the school level was the most important for SE and that all improvement efforts should be focused on this level. Many other studies supported that school and classroom levels were the two most important ones for SE

(Creemers, 1994a; Stoll and Mortimore, 1995). Therefore, it was very interesting to study the factors that the sample groups identified as important.

9.2.2.1. Factor “A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils”:

The three sample groups marked factor “*A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils*” as one of the most important factors for SE. The interviewees supported this identification. The belief that pupils must feel safe at school and under which they will be able to orderly study was common. The analysis showed that this factor was justified by common identifications for the three samples. The three samples identified this factor as important for the following reasons:

1. A safe and orderly atmosphere would allow pupils to freely and with confidence express their knowledge, skills, and emotions. These findings were supported by studies that researched the school climate. Victor and Cullen (1988) performed a factor analysis about the ethical work climates. They found that the “caring” climate was most related to high effectiveness.
2. A safe atmosphere would allow parents to actively be involved in school life and support teachers’ and pupils’ work because they would feel confident that their children were in a safe and orderly environment. In other words, if parents perceived their school’s climate as positive they are being empowered to increase involvement in school life (Griffith, 1996, 1998; Chelte et al., 1989).
3. A safe atmosphere would allow teachers to work effectively with commitment. At the same time, the teachers would allow parents to actively be involved in school life.

The atmosphere for pupils has to do with the school environment and the pupils’ attitudes within it because the school atmosphere is one of the factors that will construct and define the attitudes of pupils in school and their efforts in learning. That is why one can say that the school atmosphere and pupils’ attitudes in school are important indicators and factors

for SE. On the other hand, the majority of SE research focus on academic achievement as an indicator of SE, which is a valid indicator but neglect issues like the school climate, and pupils' attitudes. However, a number of studies have looked at pupil attitudes and found pupils to be both of good judgment and expressive observers of the school environment (Babad, Bernieri, & Rosenthal, 1991; Keys & Fernandez, 1992; MacBeath & Weir, 1991; Rudduck, Chaplain, & Wallace, 1996; SooHoo, 1993; Karatzias et al., 2001; Kyriakides, 1997; Koutselini, 1997). As SooHoo (1993) pointed out, information about SE is ignored and school's environment by failing to engage pupils actively in the research process. Students' perceptions must be valued because they are authentic sources. "As teachers, we need to find ways to continually seek out these silent voices because they can teach us so much about learning and learners" (SooHoo, 1993, p. 390).

9.2.2.2. Factor "A safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers":

It was not surprising to see that the teachers' sample recognised that "*A safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers*" was also important. One might say that, as important was a safe atmosphere for pupils so much as it was for teachers. The teachers underlined the fact that the teachers must feel safe in their work. If the teachers did not feel safe in a positive climate in the school, then they would not work efficiently and effectively to the level they would like to work focusing their efforts in schoolwork. Teachers recognised this factor because many times they did not feel safe in their school due to the "invasion" of parents on schoolwork and the problems that they cause them. The study of Townsend (1997a) showed that school environment (staff, students and parents cooperation) was among the five most important factors for SE. Stringfield (1994) defined the school climate very broadly as the total environment of the school, including the parents and the community. Many studies emphasised the role of a stimulating school climate, which could generally be recognised as

having a supportive atmosphere and a supportive role (Anderson, 1982; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Good and Brophy, 1986; Kreft, 1987).

If safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers is requested then one must not look only in staff's and leader's attitudes in school but also in parents' and pupils' attitudes because teachers recognised that the negative involvement of parents in school life creates an unsafe environment. Phelan, Davidson, and Thanh Cao (1992) supported that the views of pupils and teachers are very similar and must co-operate in the process of school improvement, because they share many values and aims. "Teachers want to be in safe and tension-free environments. Students say that they want the same things from their teachers and schools" (Phelan, Davidson, and Thanh Cao, 1992, p. 704). Davies and Ellison (1997) studied the teachers' perceptions of school quality and effectiveness. In their discussion, they reported that the staff views should be set alongside the views from parents and pupils in order to produce a profile, which will lead to school development actions. Several studies recommended that the morale of teachers, students, and parents was the primary cause of higher academic achievement (Bryk, 1988; Coleman et al., 1982a, Salganik and Karweit 1982). These arguments have important implications for SE and SI because the need for teachers, students, and parents' co-operation was more than an obvious finding.

9.2.2.3. Factor "Leader and teacher co-operation":

Building a positive and safe atmosphere in school is possible to be achieved if "*Leader and teacher co-operation*" exists. Parents and pupils identified this factor showing that both samples had the same opinions in these factors. The interviewees strongly supported the importance of this factor. The supporters had a very strong belief that the cooperation of the leader-teachers was essential for effective schooling because their relations would have an impact on class work and on pupils learning. The need for cooperation was also important in

the commitment that someone was taking to work for a specific policy, the responsibility to implement specific tasks.

Pashiardis and Orphanou (1999) studied the teachers' perspective about their headteachers in Cyprus. Among others, they found that the teachers regarded their principals as average leaders in the general area of dealing with personnel issues and that principals seem to be short of communication skills. Yiasemis (1999) in a study about the characteristics of the effective headteachers in Cyprus according to teachers' perceptions found that teachers were not satisfied with their headteachers and the cooperation with them.

Studies about collegiality showed that the approach of establishment a collegiality in decision-making was closely associated with SE and SI and was regarded as a good practice (Wallace, 1989; Renihan and Renihan, 1984; Campbell & Southworth, 1993; Cotton, 1995). The cooperation between the leader and the teachers had to do with the school climate that would "direct" school life. If cooperation existed between the leader and the teachers then mutual understanding and decisions would be taken. On the other hand, if cooperation did not exist then mistrust would exist and the leader would force his/her decisions. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) researched the issue of trust in schools, which showed that teachers' trust in principals and colleagues derived from an "authentic" climate, characterised by accountability, non-manipulation and salience of self over role. School climate was also identified as one of the few critical factors for enhancing a SE and success (Roueche and Baker, 1986; Norton, 1984; Lezotte, 1992).

During the past decades, considerable attention has been devoted to the investigation and definition of a school's climate, culture, atmosphere, personality or ethos. Whatever the term utilized, school climate is the collective personality of the school, the overall atmosphere of the school that one can feel on entering the school building. The school atmosphere is the key factor in determining school's success or failure as a place of learning (Brookover and

Lezotte, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Lezotte, 1992; Reynolds and Cuttance, 1992;). In short, the school climate serves a crucial role in determining the school's mission and the way to it (Norton, 1984). Further-more, a positive school climate is the atmosphere where teaching and learning are emphasised and rewarded and an atmosphere of collegiality and collaboration among the staff, between the staff and the leader in reaching the goals of the school exists. In general, "climate" is to an organization what "personality" is to an individual (Roueche and Baker, 1986).

Research in the area of school climate indicated that certain characteristics were associated with the climate of effective schools, which was conducive to learning (Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte, 1992; Reynolds and Cuttance, 1992; Pashiardis and Pashiardis, 1993). Glickman (1993) indicated that most successful schools demonstrated high levels of collegiality and collaboration. Finally, many studies showed that teachers believed that their leaders promoted an effective school climate, which was one of the vital factors for successful educational outcomes (Campo, 1993; Hoy and Miskel, 1996; Putman and Burke, 1992; Reynolds and Cuttance, 1992; Pashiardis and Orphanou, 1999).

9.2.3. Classroom Level:

Schools are made up of classrooms and pupils and looking for effectiveness it is often wiser to look further into the school rather than at the school. Webster and Fisher (2000) emphasised the role of the classroom in the educational system:

"Education is provided in the classroom. The classroom is the nucleus where other influences on the learning of students and results from their education are found. These influences can include: classmates, peer groups in general, teachers and textbooks. In fact, all the factors or variables that contribute to educational outcomes exist in one-way or another in the classroom" (p.340).

Scheerens and Creemers (1989) reported that the great variation between schools was in fact due to classroom variance and that the unique variance due to the influence of the school, and

not the classroom, shrank to very small levels. In the following pages a discussion of the factors that were recognised as important by the three sample groups will occur.

9.2.3.1. Factor “Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation...”:

Parents’ and pupils’ samples believed that the factor “*Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils*” was one of the most important in this level. The two samples had the same opinions on this issue supporting that this kind of lessons keep pupils’ active learning at a high level and at the same time they encourage pupils to trust their abilities. They identified that pupils go to school to learn and the teaching procedure must be focused on classroom methods that will provide effectiveness. Some interviewees disagreed with this factor because they believed that was giving emphasis only to knowledge and not to the whole personality of pupils.

Reynolds and Cuttance (1992) in their study about SE found that only an 8%-15% of the variation in pupil outcomes was due to school and classroom differences. This raises the issue of setting certain objectives in each school subject. Schools and especially classrooms must put all their efforts on specific objectives. This was also identified by Levine and Lezotte (1990) who found that schools, which restricted themselves to a certain set of objectives and spent time on these objectives, did better than other schools.

It is accepted that given the allocated class time, teachers rush through the extremely large curriculum that is required in primary education, and usually teach only lower order thinking skills. The importance of this factor was also identified by two studies in Cyprus. Papanastasiou (2002a) in his study about the effects of background and school factors on the Mathematics achievement found that, although pupils attitudes were positive for the majority of the students, achievements did not follow the same pattern. He gave the explanation that teachers have low expectations, which students can easily satisfy.

Papanastasiou (2002b) in her study about the factors that differentiate mathematics students in Cyprus reported that students who did well in mathematics (relative to the rest of the students in the same country) had more positive attitudes towards that subject than their classmates because the students were not challenged enough by their teachers. The majority of teachers (85%) in the TIMSS reported that they were feeling confident in teaching math and science. On the other hand, their pupils had shown very poor results. One explanation was that teachers felt so confident that they spent little time in preparing their lessons, which were not clearly structured (Kreouzos, 2000) because they knew that the textbooks “guide” their schoolwork so they spent little time in organizing their lessons.

9.2.3.2. Factor “The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which...”:

The factor “*The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident*” was identified by the teachers’ and parents’ sample. The two samples believed that teacher’ ability to establish a safe and quiet environment supported pupils’ learning and at the same time they felt secure and confident. The samples believed that if the teacher was not able to establish these conditions then whichever other abilities he/she has it would not achieve a high level of learning because pupils would not feel secure and confident to freely express their abilities. They believed that anyone who did not feel safe and secure in his/her working place would not feel confident to work effectively. This assumption was more obvious in pupils and their classrooms. The creation of an orderly peaceful environment that supported pupils was identified by many studies (Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Scheerens, 1992). This factor is closely connected with factors about a safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils and teachers that were identified at the school level.

Previous analysis showed that pupils’ attitudes about school were determined by the school atmosphere, which would lead pupils to feel secure and confident, or not. It was

recognised that students' perceptions of how well they were able to perform in school (self-concept) had an important influence on their responses to school. The studies showed students' perceptions of how well they did in academic subjects and of their probability for future success in those subjects. This perception according to Bandura (1997) is called self-efficacy. Other researchers reported it expectancies for success (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995) or as perceptions of competence (Harter, 1982).

In the last decade more and more educational systems found that it is worth listening to pupils' views. The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) used ethos indicators for school self-evaluation (1992) surveying pupil, parent and staff views on a range of aspects of school ethos. Phelan, Locke Davidson, and Thanh Cao (1992) in their study about students' perspectives on school they supported that the views of pupils and teachers were very similar and must co-operate in the process of school improvement, because they shared many values and aims.

9.2.3.3. Factor "The class size":

The teachers' sample group recognised the factor "*The class size*". The interviewees did not support this identification even though in their answers they set a precondition: when the issue of class size is discussed, attention is given not in extreme situations with large size over thirty pupils. Teachers in Cyprus seem to express, the same opinions with their Union (POED). The Cypriot Teachers Union (POED, 2003) in their suggestions for the improvement of the Cyprus educational system (primary education) underlined the importance of reducing class size. In addition, the Cypriot Teachers Union and the Parents Association of Primary Education (Charalambidou, 2003) in a meeting they had about coordinating their efforts in the way to improving Primary Education they agreed that reducing class size was one of the most important issues. Their belief seems to be shared and by the Ministry of Education and

Culture, which agreed with POED in establishing a Committee with representatives from the Ministry, POED, Parents Association and the University of Cyprus, which will suggest ways for reducing class size to thirty pupils (maximum) and with an average number of twenty pupils (Politis, 2003). According to Bennett (1996) and Jamison et al. (1998) teachers were supporting that class size impacts on their teaching and if their class sizes were reduced they would provide more individual attention to their pupils and they would do more small group work.

Research demonstrated that smaller classes with a mixed student composition could increase academic achievement and close the achievement gap. Research suggested that changes occur in the classroom naturally as a result of smaller size without efforts by teachers or students to do anything different. Many different situations exist in a smaller class with fewer students. Some of them are that teachers understand students better and use more tailored approaches to individuals. Pupils form closer relationships with classmates and teachers, and the atmosphere becomes friendlier, cohesive, and less regimented (Scudder, 2001).

Blatchford et al. (2002) studied the relationships between class size and teaching using a multi-method approach and data from a longitudinal study of more than 10,000 children and their teachers over 3 years. Results showed, overall, that in smaller classes, there was more individualised teacher support for learning. Finally, in a study in North Carolina three public schools were established in 1994-95 to provide smaller classes for disadvantaged inner-city students. Results findings suggested that smaller class sizes produced the largest and most consistent test gains among disadvantaged children in the earlier grades (K-2). Multivariate analysis of the data indicated that although test scores varied within and across groups by grade, there was a significant increase in test scores for students in all groups and in all grades (Haenn, 2002). Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (1996) in their study about the effect

of school resources on student achievements among others they found that smaller schools and smaller classes were also positively related to student achievement.

The Class Size Reduction program (Munoz, 2001) examined the impact of class size reduction on students, teachers, and parental involvement in 34 primary schools. Results indicated that after the one-year intervention in third grade, the program did not increase student learning as measured by mathematics and reading standardised tests. Typical implementation strategies used were self-contained classrooms with fewer students and collaborative models with small group activities. The program resulted in higher teacher job satisfaction and morale and higher parent participation levels.

9.2.3.4. Factor “The teacher provides opportunities to contribute to pupils’...”:

The pupils’ sample reported as most important the factor “*The teacher provides opportunities to contribute to pupils’ development (personal, spiritual, moral, social et cetera)*”. They justified this factor by reporting that the school must not give them only knowledge. They want to talk about their problems, their thoughts, about the people and things that will help them to express their feelings, not only to learn knowledge. Children should have the opportunities to play and to cooperate with their classmates, to feel nice, to express their feelings. Koutselini (1997) studied the life of pupils in Cyprus. One of her major findings was the belief of pupils that there was a large difference between the opportunities for multi dimensional development of each pupil, which was the main scope of our education, and to what was finally achieved.

DES (1997) in its report about the quality of schooling underlines that the twenty first century demanded more than just improvement of literacy and numeracy skills but a broad, flexible, and motivating education that recognised the different talents of all children and delivered excellence for everyone. QCA (1996) in their review of the National Curriculum in

England underline that “The school curriculum should aim to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life” (p.5). Paraskevopoulos (2002) in an article talked about the need to develop the curriculum in Cyprus so that the pupils would gain the necessary skills for research, analysis, competition and meta-cognitive skills. These skills were reported as necessary for the citizens of the 21st century.

During the last decade educational researchers and practitioners underlined the need to widen the scope of outcomes used in SE in order to reflect more fully the overall aims of schooling (Creemers, 1994; Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Thomas & Smees, 1998). In this way answers would be given to researchers that accused SE as a movement that labeled schools as good or bad after measuring them against conformity to disconnected criteria without recognising the difference not between schools but within them (Gamoran and Berends, 1987; Lingard et al., 1998). Even though there was some truth in this arguments one must not reject the view that schools can and should make a difference. It was wiser to say, however, that the sources of differential achievement in various areas (cognitive, affective, psychomotor) within schools must be carefully investigated.

It was acknowledged that pupils differ in their ability to learn. Schools should be provided with such conditions that all pupils would have the opportunity to learn, and the opportunities to develop their abilities to the maximum. One could say that equality of opportunity is one factor that must be found in every school and will determinate schooling's excellence or not. It is a precondition that will lead any school to the road of effectiveness. The equality of opportunity is not easily achieved. That is why one area of educational equality and opportunity to learn that is easily to be achieved is the fiscal equality. While equal spending does not ensure equal education, it is a precondition (Colvin, 1989). The education of students should not depend upon where they live nor on their parental circumstances. It was acknowledged that if rural schools were to provide the same services as

urban schools, the cost of program delivery will be higher per pupil (Bass, 1986). Honeyman, Thompson, Wood, and Craig (1989) justified this higher cost on the basis of societal investment in all individuals to the ultimate good of the society as a whole. Billow (1986) described the purpose of school as being to prepare children to be able to lead useful, happy, and productive lives outside of school.

Finally Thompson, Camp, Horn, and Stewart (1989) linked resource allocations to individual student needs. They emphasised that the ultimate expression of equality was “The degree to which school facilities provide the greatest opportunity for individuals to fulfill their intellectual, emotional, and social capabilities” (p. 38).

9.2.4. Pupils Level:

In this section the factors of the Pupils Level that were recognised as the most important for SE according to the opinions of the three sample groups will be discussed.

9.2.4.1. Factor “Pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential”:

The three sample groups marked factor “*Pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential*” as one of the most important factors in this level. The three sample groups marked this factor for the same reason: if the pupils were not able to accept the learning procedure, any kind of learning action would not achieve the willing results. The interviewees strongly supported this belief. In studying their answers, one can recognise three common themes: (a) The encouragement of pupils was an obligation of the teacher to act in this way, (b) The pupils must be motivated to reach their maximum potential, and (c) Effectiveness is connected with the commitment of teacher and pupil to work hard.

Papanastasiou (2002a) in his study of effects of background and school factors on the mathematics achievement in Cyprus indicated that the problem of mathematics achievement

is multidimensional in nature and student reinforcements was one of the factors that contributes to mathematics achievement. He found that, although pupils' attitudes were positive for the majority of the students, achievements did not follow the same pattern. He gave the explanation that teachers had low expectations, which students could easily satisfy. In a similar study Papanastasiou (2002b) investigated the factors that differentiate mathematics students in Cyprus reporting that students who did well in mathematics (relative to the rest of the students in the same country) had more positive attitudes towards that subject than their classmates because the students were not challenged enough by their teachers.

Pupils' encouragement to reach their maximum potential was not dependent only on the teacher, but also parents had an important role to play. Studies showed that the social support from parents was related to children's self-esteem (Cauce et al., 1990; Burnett & Demnar, 1996). Willms (1992) in a study about school performance found that among several important school climate variables, the disciplinary climate of the school, the academic influence and expectation of peers and teachers, and the extent of parental involvement in children's schooling were related to students' schooling outcomes, particularly their academic outcomes.

9.2.4.2. Factor "Pupils' opportunity to learn":

The teachers and pupils sample identified the factor "*Pupils' opportunity to learn*". If the school, and especially the teacher, was not able to establish learning conditions that would allow pupils the opportunity to learn, then, whichever were the abilities of the pupil he/she would not be able to demonstrate them. Teachers and pupils were directly connected to the everyday school life and it was very common to have common ideas on this issue. They supported the belief that pupils must have the opportunity to learn according to their ability and skills. The teachers must provide all pupils with this opportunity in the classroom and to

respect every pupil's personality. This issue was also discussed on pages 214-216 and it was acknowledged that each pupil may differ in his/her ability to learn but every pupil should be given the opportunity to develop his/her abilities to the maximum because every pupil must be prepared to achieve his/her best in everyday life. Billow (1986, p.20) reported that the purpose of school is "To prepare children to be able to lead useful, happy, and productive lives outside of school".

The equality of opportunity is one factor that must be found in every school and will determinate the excellence or not of schooling (Webster and Fisher, 2000). It is a precondition that will lead any school to the road of effectiveness. Finally, Creemers (1994) in his SE model supported that the concept of pupils' opportunity to learn was one of the main factors, which contribute to effective pupils' learning.

In Cyprus the issue of equal opportunities was very important from the moment that differences between SE and the progress made by their pupils had been identified. The provision of equal educational opportunities by policy makers must be raised (Kyriakides, 2000).

Ma (2000) in a study about socioeconomic gaps in academic achievement within schools discuss that there were two educational issues for each school: (a) quality of education, and (b) equity of education. Quality of education includes sensible schooling outcomes such as school completion, academic performance, and attitudes and values of students. Equity of education emphasises opportunity and experience for all students. In the previous pages it was acknowledged that one indicator of educational equality was financial equity. According to Colvin (1989) while equal spending did not ensure equal education, it was a precondition. The education of children should not depend upon where they live or on their parental circumstances (Darnell, 1981). Honeyman et al. (1989) reported that this had to do with societal investment in all individuals to the ultimate good of the society as a whole.

9.2.4.3. Factor “Pupils’ motivation by the teacher”:

The parents’ sample reported as most important the factor “*Pupils’ motivation by the teacher*”. Studying this identification one could recognise that the argument was based on the assumption that if the pupil was not ready or willing to work hard he/she won’t achieve what he/she could. Besides, the motivation that pupils get from their teachers empower them to build their self-concept. In such case the role of teachers is very important to motivate their pupils to work harder; to empower their efforts and to acknowledge their possibilities. The study of Papanastasiou (2002a) showed that teachers in Cyprus had low expectations, which students could easily satisfy and the reinforcement of pupils determinates pupils’ outcomes, and that students in Cyprus are not challenged enough by their teachers (Papanastasiou, 2000b). This identification was also supported by Kyriakides (1996) who found that teachers in Cyprus spent most of their teaching time working as a whole class, which did not support either motivated pupils to work harder. Townsend (1997a) in a study about the most important factors for SE found that “positive motivation strategies” (strategies that inspire the pupils to learn, challenging education) was among the five most important factors.

9.3. Research Question 2: What is the meaning of the term SE/Effective School according to the opinions of each stakeholder?

It is not easy to define the term SE, which is a conceptual problem in SE research. Every SE researcher should acknowledge an understanding of the term “School Effectiveness” because although a common accepted definition might not be necessary, a common understanding is essential. Furthermore, a common understanding is essential for all educational stakeholders.

Recognising the need to build a common understanding of the term “School Effectiveness”, the study explored the opinions, beliefs and understanding of all stakeholders. Using two instruments (questionnaires and interviews) people were asked to give their

understanding of the term SE and/or to give their definition of the term and/or to give factors that could be recognised in an effective school.

In chapter 7 (point 7.2) the definitions that each sample group gave in the questionnaire, and the common factors that each sample's group's definition revealed was discussed. A study of those factors showed that the three sample groups identified the following common themes: (a) The effective school achieves cognitive, psychological and behavioral goals, (b) The effective school's setting gives the opportunities to all pupils to achieve their best and to develop their personality, (c) The effective school demonstrates a high level of cooperation between the headteacher, the teachers and the pupils.

The above common factors correlated positively with the factors that were recognised into the second section of the questionnaire (e.g. The teacher provides opportunities to contribute to pupils' development (personal, spiritual, moral, social et cetera.), Pupils' opportunity to learn) where the sample groups had to mark the most important factors for SE. This identification supports the research findings and triangulates the results.

In Chapter 8 (point 8.3.5) the definitions that each sample group gave in the interviews and the common factors that each sample's group's definition revealed was discussed. Studying those factors showed that the three sample groups identified the following common themes: (a) In the effective school the atmosphere (the term is used as synonymous with the term ethos) of the school was very important, (b) The effective school had quality teachers, teachers that were "professionals" and committed to their work, (c) In the effective school the need for cooperation within the school between the people that interact, exchange ideas was a common understanding. The above common factors correlate positively with the factors that were recognised in the questionnaire (e.g. A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils, A safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers, Leader and teacher co-operation, The

teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident). This identification supports the research findings and triangulates the results. The only factor that cannot be triangulated is “The effective school has quality teachers, teachers that are “professionals” and committed to their work” because it was not one of the fifty-four factors of the questionnaire. The quality of the teachers (e.g. their education, training) was not one of the issues that the study investigated (for more discussion see next section, point 9.4).

Finally, even though the common factors that were identified in the definitions of the questionnaire and the interviews were not the same, they were triangulated positively with the questionnaire’s findings which strengthens the validity of the study.

9.4. Research Question 3: Are there any key factors of effective schools more important than others and, if so, why?

This study investigated the factors that contribute to effective schools and analysed in depth why these factors existed according to the perspectives of the teachers, parents and pupils. Studying chapter 8 and the discussion of the stakeholders about SE one could acknowledge that the samples emphasised their discussion on the classroom level and on TE recognising that an effective school must have quality teachers, teachers that are professionals and committed to their work. The quality of the teachers (e.g. their education, training) was not investigated because it was not one of the aims of the study and within the aims of SE. The issue of the “quality” of primary school teachers today seems to worry academic personnel in Cyprus University. Gagatsis (2002) in an article expresses his worries about the quality of primary school teachers in Cyprus. The strong correlation of teachers’ ability to teach effectively and the complex role of teachers nowadays is supported by the Cypriot Teachers Union (POED, 2003). In their suggestions for the new evaluation system in primary

education, which is negotiated with the Ministry of Education and Culture, they suggest a new role, the role of the school advisor and supporter because nowadays the role of the teacher is more complex and support in everyday schoolwork is needed. Townsend (1997a) reported that “dedicated and qualified staff” (teachers are well trained and show skills of quality teaching) was one of the five most important factors for SE.

In chapter 3 it was acknowledged that the studies at classroom and teacher level search for the factors that contribute to effective teaching and the teaching techniques that occur within a classroom. TE is taking place on a different level than studying SE. Nevertheless the impact of SE on pupil performance largely happens via TE, which encompasses classroom factors and teaching techniques. Scheerens and Bosker (1997) explain this as a step-by-step, causal process where effectiveness (promoting school characteristics) influences the conditions for effective instruction, which influence pupils’ performance. Munro (1999) acknowledges that “Teacher effectiveness, or more appropriately, teaching effectiveness, is intimately related to SE. SE will improve in parallel with change in teaching effectiveness” (p.170). Creemers (1994a) emphasises the cooperation of four levels of schooling: the context, the school, the classroom and the student levels. The school level encompasses those factors that support the conditions to make classrooms working places. According to Creemers the classroom level is the most important one. Teaching and learning is taking place in the classrooms and teachers are the most important component in the instruction process.

The Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture gives attention to factors such as books, teachers’ working conditions et cetera neglecting factors such as TE, pupils’ outcomes and value added. In addition, there is not any national assessment system or effectiveness indicators to give information about schools or TE. The only information that can be collected is by the subjective reports of the inspectors, information that is not available to the teachers,

the heads, the parents, the pupils or the society in general. Therefore it was not surprising to acknowledge that stakeholders in Cyprus recognised that the Classroom Level and TE were intimately related to SE and were the most important components for SE because the educational system gave much more emphasis on this level than the other levels.

9.5. Research Question 4: How may knowledge about SE be turned into enhanced strategies for SI and development?

Each educational system can be categorised into the following four levels: (a) The Context Level, which covers actions that the responsible authority for Education (e.g. Ministry of Education) must take to make schools working places, (b) The School Level, which covers actions that the school (head, deputy-heads, teachers, parents) must take to make schools able to promote pupils' learning according to the directions of the Context Level, (c) The Classroom Level, which covers actions that a teacher must take inside the classroom to promote pupils' learning and progress in the best possible way and (d) The Pupils' Level, which covers actions that the pupil must take to develop his/her personality according to the directions of the school, teachers, parents and peers.

A strong implication of this study was the need for two-way communication between all levels of schooling. The results of the study clearly showed that in many areas the stakeholders had the same opinions and in many others have different opinions. It was not possible to have common scope and aims if different opinions or understanding existed within the various stakeholders. Macbeath (1995) in a research study about the self-evaluating schools, pointed out, that there had been a noticeable change in attitudes to the validity of parents and pupils' views whereas, previously, it had been felt that the opinions of parents, pupils and even staff might not be fair or insightful. Davies and Ellison (1997, (p.222) studied the teachers' perceptions of school quality and effectiveness. They found that:

“The staff views can be set alongside the views of other client groups in order to produce a profile of the school as it is perceived and to point towards action points for the school’s development”.

The perceptions of teachers among those of the other stakeholders should be used for continuous improvement. Many other studies recommended that the morale of teachers, students, and parents is the primary cause of higher academic achievement (Bryk, 1988; Coleman et al., 1982a, Salganik and Karweit 1982). If the morale of teachers was high but parents ‘and/or pupils’ was low, it was not possible to have high academic achievement. However, even though these arguments were more philosophical than quantitative data based, they had important implications for SE and SI because the need for teachers, students, and parents’ co-operation was more than an obvious finding.

In Figure 9, we can see a traditional educational system. The communication between the four levels of schooling is one way. Actually it is a top-down approach, and the higher level gives directions, information and instructions to the lower levels. At the same time the lower levels even though may give information to the upper levels this information is neglected or not taken seriously. The actions for SI are taken from the upper level. These kinds of educational systems are found in conservative, centralised and slow evolutionary educational systems like in Cyprus.

Figure 9. A Traditional Educational System

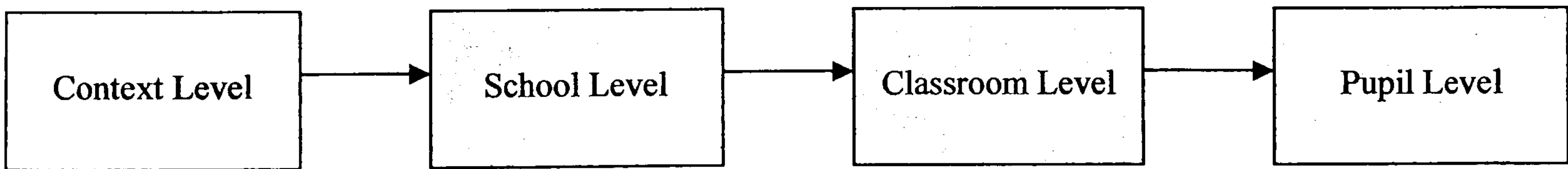


Figure 9. The information is guided from the upper level to the lower. Even though the levels may take and give information to the other levels of schooling the communication is one way, and from the upper level to the lower.

Nowadays we need a powerful, flexible and two-way communication system that each level of schooling will get and send information to the other levels of schooling (see Figure 10). The data gathered in each level will be used for SI. Each level will have the opportunity to exchanged information between the other levels of schooling, without any exceptions. In the last decade more and more educational systems find that it is worth listening to pupils' views. For example, the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID, 1992) used ethos indicators for school self-evaluation surveying pupil, parent and staff views on a range of aspects of school ethos.

Figure 10. A Powerful Educational System Leading to Effectiveness

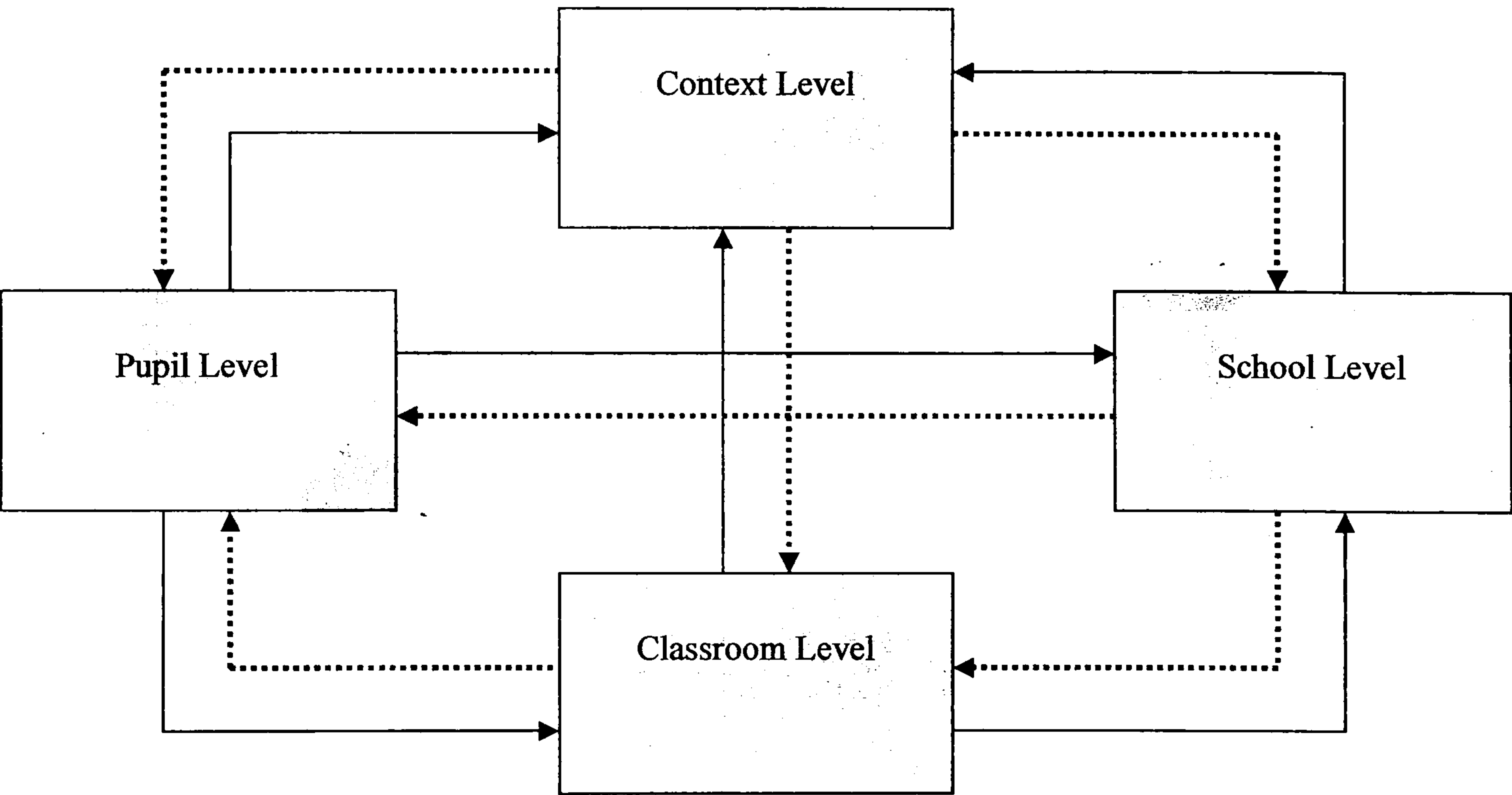


Figure 10. The information is guided from the upper level to the lower. At the same time all levels may take and give information to the other levels of schooling. The communication is two-way. The levels may exchange information between upper or lower levels of schooling.

This kind of educational system implies that every level of schooling will take the necessary attention and will have the necessary canals to send and receive information. At the same time data will be gathered in a variety of ways from all stakeholders. In this way, validity and reliability will exist between and within each level. All stakeholders' opinions

will be taken into consideration and in cases that different opinions and understanding exist, each stakeholder will have the opportunity to explain his/her opinion and understand other stakeholders opinions.

Imagine the following situation in an educational system: The higher level (Context Level) recognises the need for new textbooks in mathematics because according to the new directions in mathematic education the old textbooks were recognised as ineffective and did not satisfy the educational needs of the 21st century. A committee of university personnel, teachers, ministry's representatives et cetera writes the new textbooks. By the beginning of the new school year the books are sent to school (School Level) and teachers (Classroom Level) are asked to teach using the new books, using the new methodology that is introduced. Teachers react negatively to the new textbooks because they do not understand or do not share a common understanding of the new philosophy and methodology. Finally the teachers recognise some weaknesses in the new textbooks because pupils (Pupils Level) have difficulties in understanding the content of the new textbooks. Some teachers use a copy of the old textbooks to teach their pupils. By the end of the school year, the Ministry of Education (Context Level) recognises the need for Staff Development programs about the philosophy and methodology of the new textbooks. Staff Development programs are organised for all teachers. This scenario seems extraordinary or unbelievable but it is not. This actually took place in Cyprus some years ago. It is obvious that the Context level did not have a two-way communication with the other levels of schooling. A top down approach was used.

In a powerful education model, the actions for SI will be taken at each level that recognises the need based on data gathered from the various levels. These kind of educational systems will be found in powerful and evolutionary educational systems where improvement is seen as a sequence, a non stop action within all levels of schooling.

9.6. Research Question 5: In what ways do teachers consider themselves as factors for SI and development?

Earlier, in chapter 3, I gave my definition of the term SI trying to underline the importance of school development and improvement. The findings of this study showed that the majority of schools (more than 75%) did not have a development plan in their school. 52,8% of the teachers' sample reported that they did not need a development plan in their school. On the other hand, the majority of the parents' sample (80,3%) answered that they needed a development plan in their school. In their reports about the development plan that they had (if they had) in their school was acknowledged a misunderstanding or contextual validity issue of the term "development plan" by both samples (teachers and parents). This was supported by the descriptions they gave about a SI plan that in their opinions the school needed, which all ideas could not be categorised as SI plans. The above reports strengthen the recognition that teachers (and parents) need information and support about the role of SI and how this can be achieved. The Cypriot Teachers Union (POED, 2003) recognised the need and importance of SI plans and in their suggestions for the new evaluation system in primary education suggested that at the school level, at the beginning of each school year the staff and the head, deputy heads of each school should produce a development plan for SI. Michaelidou (2001) emphasised the need of self-evaluation of school in Cypriot educational system because information will be gathered and will be used for school improvement.

The teachers, parents and pupils sample groups were very positive in their beliefs about their school. They believed that their school could be improved and all (headteacher, teachers, parents, pupils) had something to contribute. According to my understanding no SI plan exist in most schools for the following reasons:

1. The incompetence of the headteachers to recognise the special needs of their school.

2. The ignorance of the headteachers in creating a vision for their school, which will be shared with their staff.
3. Factors 1 and 2 had to do with the limited knowledge of headteachers on SI and with the short period they serve as headteachers due to a shortcoming of the educational system.
4. The absence of initiative by the teachers to improve and develop their school. Teaching is a lonely profession and teachers see their classroom as the center of the school ignoring the school and the common directions.
5. The evaluation system of teachers and the misunderstanding of the role of inspectors, which their main concerns, are to evaluate the work of teachers neglecting their supportive role.

The above findings showed that teachers have a very important role to play in SI and development from the moment that they strongly recognised and report that their schools could be improved. Not only teachers, but also all stakeholders had something to contribute to it. But many teachers did not acknowledge the importance of SI plans due to their ignorance or lack of knowledge on this concept. Before establishing any policy about SI in Cyprus as The Cypriot Teachers Union suggested, teachers should be informed through a series on IN-SET programmes about the concept and ways of establishing a SI plan. The SI knowledge showed that any SI initiations were successful only if the staff was committed to it and only if it was developed by and within the school. Professional support would be needed from academic staff or others specialist within the SI movement.

9.7. Research Question 6: In relation to 5, how can teachers improve and develop their school?

The research findings showed that the teachers and parents sample groups believed that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher, the deputy-headteachers and the teachers to

develop and improve their school and that the teachers of the school would be interested in taking part in IN-SET programmes that could help to improve their school. The research findings showed that the majority of teachers (98,1%) and parents (96,5%) believed that the IN-SET programmes were important for three main assumptions:

1. The IN-SET programmes are essential for all professions because times change and new knowledge is built. Every professional must "search" for new ideas and approaches to improve his/her work. Moreover the teaching profession is unique because its "customers" are unique. The best possible adjustments to the new knowledge are necessary so that the teachers are empowered in their work.
2. The IN-SET programmes give specific directions that can without delay be applied to the school and classroom in order to improve class-work.
3. Due to the themes of most IN-SET programmes, which are strongly related to school life, the teachers are personally committed to the aims of the IN-SET.

It is clear that the IN-SET programmes have a very important role to play in the development and SI of any school. The most important finding of this theme was the recognition by the teachers (and parents) that the IN-SET programmes could play that role. This showed that the teachers were willing to participate in any IN-SET that would assist them in their schoolwork. Finally, it was up to the governors and the headteachers to get this message and plan IN-SET programmes that would assist teachers in their schoolwork.

All educational systems want schools to improve the capacity and quality of their pupils' learning and to raise pupils' achievements. However, there is still little consensus on exactly how schools can achieve this in practice or even how it is possible for schools to identify their need for improvement in the various areas of schooling.

The research findings showed that the teachers sample group believed that an SE program would be useful. According to their discussion, it would give the opportunity to

teachers to search for their SE. In addition, they believed that their school could be improved and all stakeholders have something to contribute.

Teaching is taking place in the classroom and for that reason teachers are responsible for most educational outcomes, whatever those are. The SE research most times neglected to add the opinions of teachers to its many sources of ideas in understanding schools and classrooms (Elliott, 1996). In some cases researchers believed that the majority of teachers have learned nothing that would support any actions to the improvement of a single pupil's performance from current SE research (West and Hopkins, 1995). Researchers, practitioners and governors tried to find ways on how can one use SE research knowledge. Many studies underlined the fact that SE results did not provide a blueprint or recipe for the creation of more effective schools (Purkey and Smith, 1983, Reid, Hopkins and Holly, 1987, Mortimore et al., 1988, Sammons, 1994 et cetera.).

Many researchers, in and out of SE research, assume that a particular set of factors makes for SE. This is not true because any list of the characteristics of effective schools cannot be implemented as it is (Stoll and Fink, 1996). Researchers, practitioners and governors must handle SE research findings as an overall concept of a school culture in which must work on all the factors at one time. One needs to discuss if it is needed to produce a conceptual framework of the factors that contribute to SE and especially in those factors that are most important in the education system concerned, and most amenable to change within the existing context. Riddell (1997) discussed the use of any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools saying that it is neither appropriate nor possible to design a generic school effectiveness study outside the context of a particular country. In addition she went one step further and discussed the idea in producing a SE baseline study that will be grounded in the actual context of each country.

The SE research must look into ways of implementing any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools. Any list is knowledge, a tool that one must use and not panacea that one must implement in any school. It is one thing to know factors that can work in one situation and a completely different thing to understand how a factor works and what processes enable it to be effective. All the outcomes of SE research must be placed within a framework giving researchers the necessary information to organise their SE research according to the state of the school that they examining so that all stakeholders can produce a development plan for SI. SI must be linked with SE research findings in improving and developing schools, based on the specific research findings and not on assumptions.

This study's findings showed that SE knowledge could be used for SI. It showed that specific factors were recognised at each level as extremely important for SE. These factors were discussed and each sample group gave its own understanding for the importance of these factors and how they worked in the system. A knowledge base for SE in Cyprus primary education is needed and a beginning has been made by this study. But a lot more must be done and many more studies are needed so that we will have reliable and valid knowledge.

One issue that needs investigation, is the way that any SE factor is implemented in any school or is used in any SI plan. Having a knowledge base of the factors that contribute to SE in Cyprus primary education according to the opinions of the stakeholders allows me to carry out studies in the future, on the processes that any SE factor is implemented in schools. As I stated above many more studies are needed so that we will have reliable and valid knowledge.

9.8. Research Question 7: How can the stakeholders empower teachers to improve and develop their school?

All stakeholders recognised that the most important factor in schools, which determines the effectiveness of any school, were the persons within it and especially teachers. A main

question was how one could empower teachers to improve and develop their school from the moment that a school was recognised as ineffective or at least in need of improvement. The findings of this study showed the following methods for empowering teachers:

1. Teachers reported that they were willing to take part in IN-SET programmes that would support them in developing their school. This was an extremely important recognition because if teachers were willing to do so then they would be personally committed to the aims of any IN-SET programme. Therefore, the first step would be to establish IN-SET programmes that would give teachers the necessary knowledge about SI so that they would be able to understand the need and importance of SI plans, because the teachers did not have the necessary knowledge about SI. This would empower and stimulate them to search for their school needs.
2. If teachers have an accepted level of understanding of SI and with the help of academic staff and/or specialist within the SI movement they would be able to organise a SI plan for their school. It must be made clear that the factors recognised in this study by the various stakeholders as important for SE would be used as a knowledge base for SI and development.
3. It was acknowledged that some factors for SE were common for teachers, parents and pupils' samples. This showed that parents, pupils and teachers could read from the same page. This identification was not something new but was knowledge that was not shared between and within the stakeholders. Therefore the stakeholders could not support and empower each other. The more effective strategy in empowering teachers is the one that teachers know that they have same opinions with parents and pupils. This does not mean that the findings of the study are panacea. But every researcher and practitioner in his/her work can use them as it uses all other research findings in any other area of educational research. They could provide a framework within which the various stakeholders could operate.

4. The need for constant development and improvement in education implies that it must be identified, through SE research, all those areas of schooling that must and could change. Weindling (1994, p.157) stated “To begin the process of school improvement, heads and staff need to review the school’s strengths and weaknesses on each of the school effectiveness factors in order to establish priorities for the school development plan”. As I said earlier, the factors for SE recognised in this research could be used as a framework for SI. The fact that this SE knowledge was built among others by teachers’ opinions strengthens any SI plans and empowers teachers because they will feel that their opinions, beliefs and understandings are valued.

9.9. Summarising

In this chapter a discussion and analysis of research results occurred. The study showed that SE definition is a conceptual problem in SE research, and nowadays we need a powerful, flexible, and two-way communication system that each level of schooling will get and send information to the other levels of schooling. In addition it showed that the stakeholders emphasised their interest on the Classroom level and on TE recognising that an effective school must have quality teachers, teachers that are professionals and committed to their work. In addition, they acknowledged that the Classroom Level and TE were intimately related to SE and were its most important components. As far as SI is concerned, the study showed that teachers and parents needed information and support about the role of SI and how this could be achieved, and that SE knowledge could be used for SI. It was found that specific factors were recognised at each level as extremely important for SE, and a knowledge base for SE in Cyprus Primary Education was needed. Finally, the teachers and parents believed that IN-SET programmes were very important for SI and could assist teachers in their schoolwork

showing that the most important factor in schools, which determined the effectiveness of any school, was the persons within it and especially the teachers.

CHAPTER 10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

10.1. Introduction

The aim of every researcher is to minimize any limitations of his/her study. Even if all the necessary actions were taken, some problems could arise during the research and things may not be as they planned. Even though I tried to minimise any limitations the following problems can be recognised.

10.2. Size and nature of the sample

Even though the sample was representative of the teachers, parents and pupils' population within the area of Nicosia it could have been be larger and could have covered all districts of Cyprus. That would have ensured that the samples were representative of all teachers, parents and pupils' populations. In this way the results would be generalisable to the whole system. In addition, there was the issue of the nature of the sample. As I stated in the research questions, one of the aims of the study was also to gather data from inspectors, headteachers and deputy headteachers. In the end this was not possible, because only a small sample of each group was willing to participate in the study. Therefore, no analysis was possible for inspectors, headteachers and deputy headteachers sample.

But as I stated, my aim was not only to report the factors that contribute to SE in Cyprus according to the views of all stakeholders, but also to investigate in depth the research findings. Therefore, the use of interviews reduced the sample groups due to the difficulty in analysing large samples.

10.3. Methods of analysis

The study's findings were analysed using the SPSS program. The statistical tools were reliable and the outcomes were supported by all necessary statistical elements. One problem

was the number of factors of each level that were analysed and discussed. The two most important factors and the two factors with the least importance were analysed. Someone could ask why only four (the two most important and two with the least important) and not more or all factors were analysed for each level? Why was only a limited number of variables considered in the quantitative analyses? This was a decision that I had to take because if more characteristics, or even all characteristics were discussed it would take too much analysis and any conclusions would be very difficult to be drawn.

10.4. Uncontrolled variance

Although all the necessary steps were taken so that any uncontrolled variance would be controlled, in such studies where people are asked to express their beliefs, there always is the possibility that some uncontrolled variance (e.g. an article in the newspapers about a relevant issue of the study, a relevant issue of the study covered by the media, an announcement by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Teachers or the Parent's Union relevant to studies research questions) may have influenced and even guided the opinions and beliefs of the sample.

10.5. Translation procedure

Although all the necessary steps were taken so that no problems would occur in the translation procedure from the Greek to English, there was always the danger of misunderstanding some of the content or issues due to the different glossary, culture and experiences of the people taking part in the study, especially from the moment that not only questionnaires, but also interviews were used where the manuscripts needed to be translated.

10.6. Summarising

All studies have their limitations and in this chapter we discuss the limitations of this study as the researcher identified them. Recognising the limitations of this study is a strength because we must be pragmatic that all educational studies have weaknesses. In the next and final chapter of the study we will discuss some key policy issues of the study.

CHAPTER 11. ADDRESSING KEY POLICY ISSUES

11.1. Introduction

This final chapter of the study will identify policy issues arising from the study.

11.2. Understanding SE

The main objective of SE movement is to report the factors that lead to SE; to improve schooling, pupils' learning and achievements (Rutter et al., 1979; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Renihan and Renihan, 1984; Mortimore et al., 1988; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993; Cotton, 1995; Sammons et al., 1995). It is recognized that the SE factors cannot be implemented in a school but are a framework for SI (Stoll and Fink, 1996; Riddell, 1997). During the last decade it was recognized that no school improvement and development could be achieved if the cooperation and commitment of all stakeholders (especially teachers) is not ensured. People's views and understanding about SE and the factors that lead to SE is one of the issues that can give directions for SI and we need to have the opinions of all stakeholders and not just teachers but also parents (McGrew and Gilman, 1991; Goldring and Shapira, 1993; Dauber and Epstein, 1989) and pupils (Karatzias et al., 2001; Benjamin & Hollings, 1995). In this study it was acknowledged that the stakeholders emphasized their interest on the Classroom level and on TE (see Chapter 8), recognizing that an effective school must have quality teachers, teachers that are professionals and committed to their work. Therefore we acknowledge that stakeholders in Cyprus recognize that the Classroom Level and TE are intimately related to SE and are the most important components for SE.

In Cyprus, except for a few studies, (Pashiardis, 1998; Gagatsis and Kyrakides, 1999; Kyriakides, 2000; Pashiardis and Pashiardis, 2000) there is not any knowledge about SE because the Ministry of Education and Culture gives attention to factors such as books, teachers' working conditions et cetera neglecting factors such as teachers' effectiveness,

pupils' outcomes and value added. In addition, there are not any national assessment system or effectiveness indicators to give information about schools or TE. The only information that can be collected is by the subjective reports of the inspectors, information that is not available to the teachers, the heads, the parents, the pupils or the society in general.

Therefore, a strong implication of this study is that a SE policy is needed in our educational system so that it will be possible to build a SE knowledge according to Cyprus reality. A policy that will gather data in various ways (value added, questionnaires, observation et cetera) and from all stakeholders is essential (teachers, pupils, parents et cetera) so that all stakeholders will understand the SE concept, the role of SE and how it can empower pupils' learning and achievements. The foundation of a SE and SI Department in the Ministry of Education and Culture like the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) in UK (of course it must be adjusted to the needs and conditions of the Cyprus Educational System) is essential because as studies show the external support is one of the factors that found to be important in improving schools and especially schools with various problems (Stoll and Myers, 1998; Potter et al., 2002, Harris and Chapman, 2002; Harris et al., 2003).

11.3. Common Understanding

The questionnaires and interviews findings (see Chapters 7 and 8) showed some common factors and themes that can lead to SE according to teachers', parents', and pupils' opinions. Those common identifications were the follows:

- In the Context Level the three samples recognised the factors “The quality of the textbooks” as one of the most important factors for effective schooling in this level. In addition, both parents' and pupils' sample reported as most important the factors “The building maintenance and the resources of the school”.

- In the School Level the three sample groups identified factor “A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils” as one of the most important factors. Also, the parents’ and pupils’ sample reported as most important the factors “Leader and teacher co-operation”.
- In the Classroom Level the factor “Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge pupils” was identified by parents’ and pupils’ sample as one of the most important factors for effective schooling in this level. The factor “The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident” was identified by the teachers’ and parents’ sample.
- In the Pupils Level the three sample groups distinct factor “Pupils’ encouragement to reach their maximum potential” as one of the most important factors at this level. In addition, the factor “Pupils’ opportunity to learn” was identified by the teachers’ and pupils’ sample.

The above findings are a basic SE knowledge about the factors that can lead to SE in Cyprus. As it is recognised the use of any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools it is neither appropriate nor possible to design a generic school effectiveness study outside the context of a particular country (Riddell, 1997). For that reason each country must conduct its own SE studies that will be grounded in the actual context of each country and it will be the basis for follow-up studies.

The SE research must look into ways of implementing any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools. Any list is knowledge, a tool that one must use and not panacea that one must implement in any school without discussion (Mortimore et al., 1988; Stoll and Fink, 1996). It is one thing to know factors that can work in one situation, and a completely different thing to understand how a factor works and what processes enable it to be effective.

Nowadays, studies show that the views of parents, pupils and teachers are valuable whereas, previously, it had been felt that the opinions of the stakeholders might not be fair or insightful (Macbeath, 1995; Davies and Ellison, 1997). The perceptions of teachers among those of the other stakeholders should be used for continuous improvement. Since there is a common understanding among the stakeholders or at least a common understanding in many issues according to the results of this study (see Chapters 7 and 8) it will be easier to start any improvement strategies based on these factors. Thus, any SI programme must include all interested parties such as teachers, parents and pupils (Stoll and Fink, 1992; Myers, 1996; Stoll et al., 1997; Hopkins, Reynolds and Gray, 1999) and not be implemented from the top down, as was the policy of the state in Cyprus so far.

11.4. Evolutionary Educational System

As I stated earlier (see Chapter 9) in a traditional educational system the communication between the four levels of schooling is one way. Actually it is a top-down approach, and the higher level gives directions, information and instructions to the lower levels. At the same time the lower levels even though may give information to the upper levels this information is neglected or not taken seriously. The actions for SI are taken from the upper level. These kinds of educational systems are found in conservative, centralised and slow evolutionary educational systems like in Cyprus. Nowadays we need a powerful, flexible and two-way communication system that each level of schooling will get and send information to the other levels of schooling (Scheerens, 1990; Stringfield and Slavin, 1992; Creemers, 1994a; Scheerens, 1997). The data gathered in each level will be used for SI. Each level will have the opportunity to exchanged information between the other levels of schooling, without any exceptions.

In this perspective the Cyprus Educational System must be transformed into a powerful and evolutionary educational system (see Chapter 9) where SE and SI are seen as an essential sequence, as non-stop actions within all levels of schooling. Each level must gather data about its effectiveness and efficiency so that this kind of information will be used for improvement and development. Emphasise must be given at the School and Classroom Level because the study identified that stakeholders gave emphasis on the Classroom Level and on TE (see Chapter 7 and 8). In addition, as I stated earlier, the foundation of a SE and SI Department in the Ministry of Education and Culture is essential in an evolutionary educational system in order to support every school's efforts. Because it is not sufficient to have approaches for SE, SI and self evaluation projects in order to use it for SI, without having the support of a well organised SE and SI Department. For example the Effective School Self Evaluation project found in UK, while most schools now carry out some form of self-evaluation, in order to use it for SI, the nature and extent of this varies considerably and although 60% of primary and 90% of secondary schools (in UK) carry out self-evaluation, only one-quarter perform well regarding self-evaluation (Standing International Conference of Inspectorates, 2001).

11.5. Evaluating each Level's efficiency and effectiveness

As we saw in Chapters 7 and 8, the research findings showed specific factors at each level that can lead to SE. Some factors were common for the three sample groups (teachers, parents and pupils) and others were not. A strong implication of this research finding is that one must search for SE at all levels of schooling something that is also supported by the international literature on SE and SI research (Mortimore et al., 1988; Scheerens, 1990; Stringfield and Slavin, 1992; Creemers, 1994a; Scheerens, 1997).

The Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture gives attention to factors such as books, teachers' working conditions et cetera neglecting factors such as pupils' outcomes and value added (see Chapter 2 about the Cyprus Educational System and especially the section about the Teachers Evaluation System). In addition, there are not any national assessment system or effectiveness indicators to give information about schools or TE. The only information that can be collected is by the subjective reports of the inspectors, information that is not available to the teachers, the heads, the parents, the pupils or the society in general. Therefore it was not surprising to acknowledge that stakeholders in Cyprus recognised that the Classroom Level and TE were intimately related to SE and were the most important components for SE because the educational system gives much more emphasis on this level than the other levels. Various studies show that a central focus on teaching and learning was a common denominator of the schools' success (Hopkins, 2001; Potter et al., 2002).

As it was previously stated (see point 11.4) a new evaluation system must be implemented and all levels (Context, School, Classroom, Pupil) must be assessed giving information for improvement actions. Education must be seen as a system where the four levels cooperate. Only in this way it will be possible to implement changes in all levels of the educational system that will empower the School, Classroom Level and TE.

11.6. Setting aims for SI

According to the Cyprus Educational System the Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for implementing SI plans and innovations in schools. This explains the research findings which showed that teachers and parents need information and support about the role of SI and how this can be achieved (see Chapters 7 and 8).

The factors that were recognized in the study as important for SE can be used for SI in each level. A new approach for SI is needed, setting it as an essential part of the

educational system and acknowledging that any SI program must include all interested parties such as teachers, parents and pupils. It must not be implemented from the top down, as was the policy of the state so far. Each school must investigate its own factors that can lead to effectiveness at the school, classroom and pupils level and how these factors can improve schooling. Studies emphasized the need for schools to become learning communities, engaged in continuous improvement efforts (Joyce et al., 1999; Stoll, 1999a). As I already recognized, the foundation of a SE and SI Department in the Ministry of Education and Culture is essential in order to set new aims and to support every school's efforts. In addition the perceptions of teachers among those of the other stakeholders should be used for continuous improvement.

In addition the findings of the study on the SI concept (see Chapters 7 and 8) showed that:

- The majority of schools (more than 75%) did not have a development plan in their school.
- 52,8% of the teachers' sample and 19,7% of parents sample reported that they did not need a development plan in their school.
- In their reports about the development plan that they had (if they had) in their school showed a misunderstanding or contextual validity issue of the term "development plan" by both samples (teachers and parents).
- The teachers, parents and pupils sample groups were very positive in their beliefs about their school. They believed that their school could be improved and all stakeholders had something to contribute.

These findings show that teachers have a very important role to play in SI and development from the moment that they (and the parents) strongly recognize and report that their schools could be improved. But many teachers (52,8%) did not acknowledge the importance of SI plans due to their ignorance or lack of knowledge on this concept. Therefore,

a policy on SI programmes is needed and the Ministry of Education and Culture must utilize the recognition of the Union of Cypriot Teachers (POED, 2003) that a policy about SI in Cyprus must be established. But before that, the teachers should be informed through a series on IN-SET programmes about the concept and ways of establishing a SI plan and also about schools' self-evaluation because information will be gathered and will be used for school improvement (Michaelidou, 2001). The SI knowledge (Stoll and Fink, 1992; Myers, 1996; Stoll et al., 1997) showed that any SI initiations were successful only if the staff was committed to it and only if it was developed by and within the school. Professional support would be needed from academic staff or others specialist within the SI movement.

11.7. The role of IN-SET programmes

The research findings (see Chapters 7 and 8) showed that the teachers and parents sample groups believed that an IN-SET programme would help the headteacher, the deputy-headteachers and the teachers to develop and improve their school. At the same time teachers reported that they were interested to take part in IN-SET programmes that could help to improve their school. In addition, the research findings showed that the majority of teachers (98,1%) and parents (96,5%) believed that the IN-SET programmes were important because: they are essential for all professionals (they give information about new knowledge and approaches), they give specific directions that can without delay be applied into the school and classroom in order to improve class-work and they are strongly related to school life and the teachers are personally committed to the aims of the IN-SET.

Consequently, the Ministry of Education and Culture must establish a new approach about the role of IN-SET programmes, which must not be seen only as a way for implementing innovations or new knowledge to the teachers but, also as a mean for assisting and empowering teachers to search for their SE and SI. As the teachers reported, were willing

to participate in any IN-SET that would assist them in their schoolwork. This report is very important because it is recognised that teachers must identify the need of any IN-SET programme before organising it in order to be effective (Holly, James and Young, 1987). So, it is up to the governors and the headteachers to get this message and plan IN-SET programmes that would assist teachers in their schoolwork. The literature on the role of IN-SET programmes, shows that teachers learn best through concrete experiences where they apply that what is being learned (Holly and Southworth, 1989; Hopkins, 1986; Wade, 1985; Sparks, 1983; Wood and Tompson, 1980)

All educational systems want schools to improve the capacity and quality of their pupils' learning and to raise pupils' achievements. However, there is still little consensus on exactly how schools can achieve this in practice or even how it is possible for schools to identify their need for improvement in the various areas of schooling. The research findings showed that the teachers sample group believed that an SE program would be useful. According to their discussion (see Chapter 8) it would give the opportunity to teachers to search for their SE.

According to the questionnaires results (Chapter 7) and to the interviews analysis (Chapter 8) all the stakeholders recognized that the most important factor in schools, which determines its effectiveness, are the persons within it and especially teachers. A main question was how one could empower teachers to improve and develop their school from the moment that a school was recognized as ineffective or improvement initiatives are needed. The findings of this study showed that the establishment of IN-SET programmes would give teachers the necessary knowledge about SE and especially about SI so that they would be able to understand the need and importance of SI plans, because as the study showed, the teachers did not have the necessary knowledge about SI. So, it is recognized that the IN-SET programmes may empower and stimulate teachers to search for their school needs.

11.8. Future Research on SE and SI

Teaching is taking place in the classroom and for that reason teachers are responsible for most educational outcomes, whatever those are. The SE research most times neglected to add the opinions of teachers to its many sources of ideas in understanding schools and classrooms (Elliott, 1996). In some cases researchers believed that the majority of teachers have learned nothing that would support any actions to the improvement of a single pupil's performance from current SE research (West and Hopkins, 1995). Researchers, practitioners and governors tried to find ways on using SE research knowledge. Many studies underlined the fact that SE results did not provide a blueprint or recipe for the creation of more effective schools (Purkey and Smith, 1983, Mortimore et al., 1988, Sammons, 1994 et cetera.).

Many researchers, in and out of SE research, assume that a particular set of factors makes for SE. This is not true because any list of the characteristics of effective schools cannot be implemented as it is (Stoll and Fink, 1996). Researchers, practitioners and governors must handle SE research findings as an overall concept of a school culture in which must work on all the factors at one time. One needs to discuss if it is needed to produce a conceptual framework of the factors that contribute to SE and especially in those factors that are most important in the education system concerned, and most amenable to change within the existing context. Any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools it is neither appropriate nor possible to be used for a SE study outside the context of a particular country. In addition a SE baseline study is needed that will be grounded in the actual context of each country (Riddell, 1997).

The SE research must look into ways of implementing any list of the factors that contribute to effective schools. Any list is knowledge, a tool that one must use and not panacea that one must implement in any school. It is one thing to know factors that can work in one situation and a completely different thing to understand how a factor works and what

processes enable it to be effective. All the outcomes of SE research must be placed within a framework giving researchers the necessary information to organize their SE research according to the state of the school that they examining so that all stakeholders can produce a development plan for SI. In addition, SI must be linked with SE research findings in improving and developing schools, based on the specific research findings and not on assumptions.

This study investigated:

- the key factors that contribute to effective schools in Cypriot Primary Education predicated on the opinions of teachers, parents and pupils,
- the meaning of the term SE/Effective School according to the opinions of each stakeholder,
- if there were any key factors of effective schools more important than others and, if so, why,
- how may knowledge about SE be turned into enhanced strategies for SI and development,
- the ways that teachers consider themselves as factors for SI and development and how can teachers improve and develop their school, and,
- how can the stakeholders empower teachers to improve and develop their school.

The study's findings showed that SE knowledge could be used for SI, and that specific factors were recognized at each level as extremely important for SE. These factors were discussed (see chapters 7, 8 and 9) and each sample group gave its own understanding for the importance of these factors and how they worked in the system. A knowledge base for SE in Cyprus primary education is needed and the beginning has been made by this study. But a lot more must be done in the incoming years and many more studies are needed so that they will give information about SE and SI in Cyprus. To be more specific:

1. There is the issue of the nature of the sample. We need to investigate the opinions of all stakeholders (teachers, parents, pupils, inspectors, heads and deputy heads) by gathering reliable and valid data.
2. We need to use larger samples that will cover all districts of Cyprus in order to ensure that the samples are representative of all stakeholders' populations. In this way the results would be generalisable to the whole system.
3. We need to investigate in depth all the factors that were recognized as important and contribute to SE in Cyprus and not just the two most important factors of each Level. The study showed that all factors were important in order to have SE (only one factor was marked with an average less than 3.5/7 (median)). This implies that each factor must be activated in certain periods of school life, at the appropriate level, at the right time, at a certain level, in an appropriate domination to others. Therefore, we must investigate in depth all the factors by conducting interviews with all stakeholders.
4. We need to investigate the characteristics of effective schools not only in Primary Education but also in Secondary Education and Pre-primary Education because each Education Level is organized in a different structure.
5. We need to study the differences, if any, of SE factors of each school district. In addition we need to search if the factors that contribute to SE in large schools are different with those in small schools.
6. We need to gather information about SE not only predicated on the opinions of the stakeholders but also using various research tools (value-added measures, national indicators, national exams results, observation et cetera), using various analysis methods (multilevel modeling, multiple regression et cetera) so that we will be able to build a SE knowledge based on various data.

7. One issue that also needs investigation is the way that any SE factor is implemented in any school or is used in any SI plan. Building a knowledge base of the factors that contribute to SE in Cyprus Education (Pre-Primary, Primary, Secondary) will allow us to carry out studies, on the processes that any SE factor is implemented in schools.

Personally in the next years I will focus my studies on investigating the ways that any SE factor is implemented in schools or is used in any SI plan into Cyprus Education. In addition I will try to build a knowledge base of the factors that contribute to SE in Cyprus Education by gathering and analyzing information about SE using various research tools (value-added measures, national exams results et cetera) and various analysis methods (multilevel modeling, multiple regression et cetera).

11.9. Summarizing

The road to SE is very difficult because one must work on many issues at the same time and with various groups of people. But for every educational system of the postmodern world this is a one-way road in which all stakeholders have to cooperate. This study clearly showed that effectiveness is something that must exist at all levels of schooling and specific factors must be found. All stakeholders have an important role to play and common understanding exists in many areas and levels of schooling. In addition SI is a non stop procedure which must exist in all schools. The stakeholders in Cyprus are willing to participate in SI programs that will improve pupils' progress and achievements. The foundation of a SE and SI Department at the Ministry of Education and Culture will promote SE and SI in Cyprus.

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APPENDIX

LETTER TO HEADTEACHERS

Christakis Yiasemis

13A Ioustinianou, Kaimakli

1025 Nicosia

Tel. 22-435720 (home), 22-333653 (work)

E-mail: cyiasemis@otenettel.com

1st September 2001

Dear headteacher,

I am sending this letter to ask for your permission to conduct a research in your school about School Effectiveness, which is part of my research for a Ph.D. Degree in Education.

Based on the opinions, knowledge, beliefs and experiences of teachers, parents and pupils (6th grade) of each chosen school I will study using questionnaires the characteristics that an effective school should have and the possible implications for school improvement in Cypriot Primary Education.

It is necessary for me to have the opinions and beliefs of teachers, parents and pupils (6th grade) of your school in order to succeed in my research. Their answers are essential for the study of school effectiveness of the Cypriot Primary Education as they are directly involved in the everyday life of primary education and their experiences and judgments are authentic and valuable.

Please, if you want more information about the study; methods used or you do not give your permission for the study **call either to the above phone numbers.**

I am most appreciative of your help in this research. Thank you for your co-operation.

Christakis Yiasemis

THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

**Christakis Yiasemis
13A Ioustinianou, Kaimakli
1025 Nicosia
Tel. 22-435720 (home), 22-333653 (work)
E-mail: cyiasemis@otenettel.com**

1st October 2001

Dear colleague,

I wonder if I may trouble you to make a little time to complete the following questionnaire, which is part of my research for a Ph.D. Degree in Education.

The questionnaire refers to the level of importance of characteristics that a school should have in order to be effective. The characteristics are formed in four levels: 1. The Context Level, 2. The School Level, 3. The Classroom Level and 4. The Pupils Level.

Based on your opinions, knowledge, beliefs and experiences the research will study the characteristics that an effective school should have and the possible implications for school improvement in Cypriot Primary Education. Later, the research will study the opinions of all the stakeholders. Finally, personal interviews will be conducted with all the stakeholders in order to research in depth the characteristics of effective schools and analyze the questionnaire findings.

The questionnaire is anonymous and confidential so, please, do not state any information that will reveal your identity. You will need about **20 minutes** to complete the questionnaire.

It is necessary for me to have your opinions and beliefs in order to succeed in my research. Your answers are essential for the study of school effectiveness of the Cypriot Primary Education as you are directly involved in the everyday life of primary education and your experiences and judgments are authentic and valuable. Finally, even it is obvious, I would like to inform you that the words teacher, headteacher, pupil, inspector, parent is used for both genders male and females.

I am most appreciative of your help in this research. Thank you for your co-operation.

Christakis Yiasemis

General instructions: Before you answer the questions please read carefully all possible answers and then answer the questions in a way that corresponds to your opinion. Please try to give an answer to all the questions.

A.1. Researchers and practitioners use the term “School Effectiveness-Effective School” to describe a certain situation in a school. Please define what you understand by the term “effective school”? In other words which is the “effective school” for you?

A.2. Circle the number that is reflecting your opinion showing **how important is each one of the following characteristics for an effective school**. Please, try to answer all the questions. Have in mind that: **1= no important, 7= very important and 4= middle point**.

1. Context level:

1.1. The quality of the curriculum	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.2. The financial support/per pupil expenditure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.3. The educational policy of the state	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.4. The inspectors’ support on everyday school work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.5. The school size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.6. Parents positive involvement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.7. Parents’ support and assistant to their children’s progress	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.8. The use of In-Service Training Programs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.9. The formation of National standards in Primary Education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.10. The building maintenance and the resources of the school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.11. The quality of the textbooks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.12. The teachers’ evaluation system	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. School level:

2.1. Strongly educational leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.2. Leader and teacher co-operation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.3. Teachers’ feedback and reinforcement by the leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.4. Teachers’ participation in decision-making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.5. A Clear and common vision by the leader and the staff	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.6. A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.7. An safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.8. Any taken actions about the continues improvement of the school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.9. The culture of the school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.10. Common strategies and behaviours in classroom teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.11. School’s links with the wider community contribute to pupils’ attainment and personal development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.12. Efficient and effective use of resources (finance etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.13. Parents regularly visits to school to be informed about their children progress	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Classroom level:

3.1. Clearly structured lessons, which maintain motivation and challenge for pupils	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.2. The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.3. The teacher gives emphasis on the core knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.4. The teacher gives emphasis on basic skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.5. High expectations for pupils' progress by the teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.6. Frequent monitoring and evaluation of pupils progress by the teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.7. The use of groups into classroom work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.8. The use of co-operative learning into classroom work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.9. The use of active learning into classroom work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.10. Rich learning environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.11. The use and the amount of homework	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.12. Pupils' positive feedback and reinforcement by the teacher according to each pupil's abilities and difficulties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.13. The system of rewards and punishments used by the teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.14. The class size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.15. The use of close and open questions by the teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.16. The teacher displays pupils' work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.17. The teacher uses time and resources effectively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.18. The teacher provides opportunities to contribute to pupils' development (personal, spiritual, moral, social etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.19. The teacher evaluates his/her own teaching critically and use this to improve his/her effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.20. The teacher's experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Pupils level:

4.1. Pupils' positive behaviour at school and classroom	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.2. Pupils' help and support by the teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.3. Pupils' encouragement to reach their maximum potential	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.4. Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations from themselves	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.5. Pupils' achievements in school work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.6. Pupils' motivation by the teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.7. Emphasis on pupils meta-cognitive skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.8. Pupils' opportunity to learn	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.9. Pupils are actively involve in school life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A.3. Please, report any other characteristics that an “effective school” should have and are not reported above:

B. Please answer the questions and put a ✓ in the box that reflects your opinion:

B.1. Researchers and practitioners use the term “**development plan**” to describe a plan that is used in a school in order to solve a problematic situation or to introduce an innovation at the school or/and classroom or/and pupils level.

B.1.1. Has your school a development plan?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If “**Yes**” then describe the development plan:

B.1.2. If “**No**”, do you think that you need a development plan? ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

What kind of development plan? Why? Describe it in brief.

B.2. Do you believe that **In-Service Training Programmes** help teachers to develop their school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain:

B.3. Circle the number that is reflecting your opinion to describe the current situation in your school. Have in mind that: 1= not at all, 7= Very much and 4= middle point

About my school:

- 3.1. I believe that my school could be improved

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 3.2. I believe that an IN-SET programme would help me to develop and improve my school

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 3.3. I believe that an IN-SET programme would help my headteacher to develop and improve our school

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 3.4. I believe that my colleagues would be interested to take part in IN-SET programmes that could help us to develop and improve our school

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

B.4. Please report anything else about **your school**:

B.5. Please report anything else you want about **any part of this research** or about the “effective schools”:

C. Please tick ✓ the appropriate box:

1. Gender: (1) Male ☐

(2) Female ☐

2. Teaching Experience in years:

(1) 1-5 ☐ (2) 6-10 ☐ (3) 11-15 ☐ (4) 16-20 ☐ (5) 21-25 ☐ (6) 26-... ☐

3. Pedagogical Education:

(1) P.A.C.

(2) BA ☐

(3) MA

(4) Ph.D.

(5) Other ☐

4. School size:

(1) 1-6 teachers ☐

(2) 7-12 teachers

(3) 13-18 teachers ☐

(4) 19-... teachers

5. Service in this school (in years):

(1) 1-2 ☐

(2) 3-4

(3) 5-6 ☐

(4) 7-8

Please, if you are interested to take part in the second part of the research, which is personal interviews, report your name **or call to the following phone number:**

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Christakis Yiasemis
Ioustinianou 13A Kaimakli
1025 Nicosia
Tel. 22-435720

Thank you for your time. I am most appreciative of your help.

THE PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE (cover sheet)

**Christakis Yiasemis
3rd Aglantzia Primary School
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13A Ioustinianou, Kaimakli (home)
1025 Nicosia
Tel. 22-435720
e-mail: cyiasemis@otenettel.com**

1st October 2001

Dear parent,

The following questionnaire is part of my research for a Ph.D. Degree in Education. The research will investigate the characteristics of effective schools and the implications for school improvement in Cypriot Primary Education according to the opinions of all the stakeholders.

The questionnaire refers to the level of importance of characteristics that an effective school should have. The characteristics are formed in four levels: 1. The context level, 2. The school level, 3. The classroom level and 4. The pupils level.

Based on your opinions, knowledge and beliefs you have to mark ALL the characteristics according to their importance. Using the results of this questionnaire I will try to give an answer to the following questions, based on the opinions of parents:

1. What are the most important characteristics that a school should have in order to be effective?
2. What is the meaning of the term “effective school”?
3. If the characteristics of the schools are different than those identified by the research then what are the implications for change and improvement?

The questionnaire is anonymous and confidential so, please, do not state any information that will reveal your identity. You will need about 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

It is necessary for me to have your opinions and beliefs in order to succeed in my research. Your answers are essential for the study of school effectiveness of the Cypriot Primary Education as you and your child/children are directly involved in the everyday life of primary education and your experiences and judgments are authentic and valuable.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Christakis Yiasemis

THE PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE (Personal information)

C. Please tick ✓ the appropriate box:

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age in years: 20-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐
51-60 ☐ 61-... ☐

3. Profession: (Please explain) _____

4. School: _____

5. Your child's grade (If you have more than one child in the school please report only the oldest): _____

6. Teacher's Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

THE PUPILS' QUESTIONNAIRE (Personal information)

C.1. Please tick √ the appropriate box for you:

1. Gender: (1) Boy ☐ (2) Girl ☐

2. Your mother's profession (explain): _____

3. Your father's profession (explain): _____

4. Teacher's Gender: (1) Male ☐ (2) Female ☐

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A.1. Please tick \surd the appropriate box:

Gender: (1) Male ☐ (2) Female ☐

Teaching Experience in years:

(1) 1-5 ☐ (2) 6-10 ☐ (3) 11-15 ☐ (4) 16-20 ☐ (5) 21-25 ☐ (6) 26-... ☐

Pedagogical Education:

(1) P.A.C. (2) BA (3) MA

(4) Ph.D. ☐ (5) Other ☐

1. Researchers and practitioners to describe a certain situation in a school use the term “School effectiveness-effective School”. Please define what you understand by the term “effective school”? In other words which is the “effective school” for you?

2. According to the questionnaire's results the following factors appeared as the two most important and the two factors with the least important in each Level (The interviewee studies the Tables with the two most important and the two factors with the least important in each Level). Do you agree with these factors? Why? With which characteristics do you disagree and why?

3. Why do you think the teachers recognised these characteristics? Discuss all the characteristics and try to explain why do these characteristics appear.

4. Do you have any development plant in your school? Yes/No? If “Yes” then describe the development plan.

5. If “No”, do you think that you need a development plan? Yes/No? Why?

6. What do you believe about the INSET programmes? Do you believe that INSET programmes empower teachers to improve and develop their school? Yes/No, explain?

7. Why do you believe about your school? Can be improved/developed? Why?

8. Please report anything else you want about any part of this interview/study.

9. Please report anything else you want about school effectiveness or about the “effective schools”.

INTERVIEW MANUSCRIPT SAMPLE
CHRISTINA'S INTERVIEW MANUSCRIPT

A.1. Please tick \checkmark the appropriate box:

Gender: (1) Male ☐ (2) Female ☒

Teaching Experience in years:
 (1) 1-5 ☐ (2) 6-10 ☐ (3) 11-15 ☐ (4) 16-20 ☐ (5) 21-25 ☐ (6) 26-... ☒ V

Pedagogical Education:

(1) P.A.C. ☐ (2) BA ☒ (3) MA ☐

(4) Ph.D. ☐ (5) Other ☐ _____

1. Researchers and practitioners to describe a certain situation in a school use the term “School effectiveness-effective School”. Please define what you understand by the term “effective school”? In other words, which is the “effective school” for you?

For me the effective school is that where it works as a system, where people are “alive”, the school is part of the society... *The effective school is the school that attention is given to “We” and not to “I”. People are interested in the school and not just in their classroom. Above all is the school. That is why the atmosphere and the climate of the school are very important factors.*

2. According to the questionnaire's results the following factors appeared as the two most important and the two factors with the least important in each Level (The interviewee studies the Tables with the two most important and the two factors with the least important in each Level). Do you agree with these factors? Why? With which characteristics do you disagree and why? In addition, discuss all the characteristics and try to explain why do these characteristics appear.

Please comment the Context Level factors (two most important and two least important factors):

Well looking into this table *I do not believe that the quality of the textbooks (1.11) is so important for effective schooling because the most important element is the teacher and how he/she uses the textbooks. It is the teacher that makes the textbook that what it is and you do not accept it as it is, it is up to the teacher to use it effectively... From the moment that the teachers recognize this factor so important it was expected that the parents and pupils would recognize it also because both are persuaded that the textbooks are important, if you covered the curriculum consumption according to the textbook then you are a good teacher and a good pupil then the textbook is very important. But what about if the teacher covered the same theme in a different way and more effectively? Yes, most of people believe that if you covered the curriculum according with the textbook then you are a very good teacher. But it is more than that; we use so many things in a lesson. If it was so easy then anyone could use the textbook and anyone could teach.*

As far as parents' support and assistant to their children's progress factor (1.7) I believe that as it is our system the parents play an important role because they spend many hours with their children... If we need cooperation to achieve high results we need the help and support of parents not only for helping pupils in a knowledge basis but more to support on the various problems that their children come against.

I would like to comment also the factor 1.12. *I agree with the teachers' evaluation system factor because the teachers' evaluation system want play any role to a mature teacher. In other words he/she want work because he/she will evaluated. If you are a completed teacher then you do not need the inspector to evaluate you in order to work effectively.* In addition I agree with the factor "The inspectors' support on everyday schoolwork" (1.4) because that role should belong to the headteacher because he/she has everyday contact with the teachers. The inspector does not have the opportunity to support on everyday school work

Please comment the School Level factors (two most important and two least important factors):

Looking into this table I am wondering *how is it possible to have factor "A safe and orderly atmosphere for pupils" (2.6) and "A safe and orderly atmosphere for teachers" (2.7) if "Leader and teacher cooperation" (2.2) does not exist? I disagree because if there is honest cooperation between the headteacher and the teachers then this positive climate is transmitted to the pupils. If I cooperate with my headteacher then we can exchange views in a positive climate. I believe that factor 2.2 is very important. I believe that recognizing factor 2.7 is like saying "I can create a positive and safe climate for my pupils, I can go well with my colleagues if I want it". This is possible only if "we" cooperate and not "I". If the pupils see that all parties are cooperative they will say "look our teachers they cooperate, they go so well, they help each other, they are very kind to each other so we will do the same". There is teachers' society and pupils' society; there is a way to transfer the climate from one society to the other. The climate that is shared between the staff plays a huge role into the school.*

I would like also to comment the factor 2.10. As I see the teachers and pupils sample identified factor" Common strategies and behaviors in classroom teaching" (2.10) as one of those with the least importance. *I disagree with this identification because the common strategies play an important role for the success or not of the school in issues like discipline, behavior. We must have a common policy and strategy in some issues of the schoolwork.* In addition I disagree with the factor "School's links with the wider community contribute to pupils' attainment and personal development" (2.11) because in order to have an effective school must have close relations with the community and must show its achievements to the society, to parents, to the community itself. Because by saying that "we are effective" without proving our words then we achieve nothing. Lets not forget that the pupils are part of that community and will be citizens and parts of that community.

Please comment the Classroom Level factors (two most important and two least important factors):

I agree with factor "The teacher provides opportunities to contribute to pupils' development" (3.18) because if we accept the pupils with the abilities they have, if we accept the child as it is then it means that we can improve it as a person... his/her

abilities. If we accept pupils as they are then the pupils will understand that their teacher love them and accepts them as they are. The pupils will feel safe with their teacher and will be free to express themselves.

I do not agree with the factor “The teacher establishes a safe and quiet environment which supports learning and pupils feel secure and confident” (3.2) because the factors 3.18 is more important. If we accept the personality of each pupil and we have clear aims and perform clearly structured lessons as factors 3.1 says then we will achieve our goals.

Do you believe that 3.1 is important?

Yes, I believe that probably they did not recognize this factor because teachers believe that their lessons are clearly structured encompassing motivation and challenge for the pupils. I believe that pupils recognized this factor because they feel that this is missing from their teachers' lessons...

What about factor 3.14?

As far as factor “The class size” (3.14) I do not agree because as things are in our system all classes are around 30 pupils which I believe is a satisfactory class size. Of course we are not talking for extreme situations where we might have 34-35 pupils...

I agree that the factor “The teacher's experience” (3.20) is not important because someone might have 5 or 20 years of teaching experience and to achieve same things. One the other hand I disagree with factor “The teacher displays pupils' work” (3.16) because I believe that pupils' work if it is displayed regularly into the classroom...that empowers pupils and motivates them to work harder. The children will compare their work with other children's work; will get ideas...pupils like to see their work displayed. But we must ensure that all pupils will have the opportunity to see their work displayed.

Please comment the Pupils Level factors (two most important and two least important factors):

I agree with factor “Pupils' opportunity to learn” (4.8) because every pupil must have the opportunity to achieve his/her best according to his/her abilities. Every pupil must have the opportunity to develop his/her personality. Also I agree with factor “Pupils' encouragement to reach their maximum potential” (4.3) because every pupil must be encouraged to reach his/her maximum potential. Is not that opportunity to learn if people are encouraged to use all their abilities?

What about the two factors with the lowest mean?

Well I disagree with factor “Pupils have high self-esteem and expectations from themselves” (4.5) because it is not possible to have an effective school if the pupils do not have high expectations from themselves. How they will work harder if they do not press themselves?

As far as factor “Pupils' everyday help and support by the teacher” (4.2) I agree that it is not important from the moment that the teacher provides opportunities to all pupils to achieve their best...because if we have dedicated teachers then they will support their pupils.

3. *Do you have any development plan in your school? Yes/No? If “Yes” then describe the development plan.*

No, this year we did not have any development plan because we have a new headteacher and she needed time to organize the school, recognize the needs, cooperate with the staff et cetera... Although we discussed this issue at the end we decided to focus our efforts on other issues.

4. *If “No”, do you think that you need a development plan? Yes/No? Why?*

Yes, we need a development plan on the issue of pupils’ discipline... We need to empower pupils self-esteem and self control because we experience some discipline problems as well as low pupils’ morale...

5. *What do you believe about the INSET programmes? Do you believe that INSET programmes empower teachers to improve and develop their school? Yes/No, explain?*

Yes I believe that IN-SET programmes help and support teachers to improve their work. ***I consider these programmes as very important especially if these are structured according to teachers’ needs. Generally I believe that the IN-SET programmes are essential part of every teacher’s work. It would be useful if the IN-SET programmes were organized in schools in regular time.***

6. *What do you believe about your school? Can be improved/developed? Why?*

Well, I believe that my school, as well as all schools, can be improved because there are always new limits where we can reach... There are always new areas where we can improve and develop. In addition every year we have new pupils so new things and maybe different approaches are needed every year.

Who may help into a school’s improvement?

I believe that all stakeholders may cooperate and may improve their school in various areas. All have an important role to play in any kind of SI plan.

7. *Please report anything else you want about any part of this interview/study.*

I do not have anything else to report.

8. *Please report anything else you want about school effectiveness or about the “effective schools”.*

I would like to see “open schools”, schools where all stakeholders are interested about their school and not about their classes, pupils. I would like to see teachers saying, “our pupils are good” and not “my pupils are good”.

Note: the text in bold italics was used as reference in the study.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The stratified sampling method was used. This method involves dividing the population into homogeneous groups, each containing subjects with similar characteristics. Therefore all schools of capitol Nicosia (total number of schools 56, for more information see <http://www.moec.gov.cy>) were divided into three categories according to their teachers' population:

1. Category A: 7-12 teachers
2. Category B: 13-18 teachers
3. Category A: 19-... teachers

Then schools from the three categories were chosen (Stage sampling) in such a way that most areas of the capital Nicosia (Nicosia, Kaimakli, Palouriotissa, Aglantzia, Strovolos, Agios Dometios, Egkomi, Makedonitissa) were covered. Finally a number of 18 schools were chosen. After schools selection the classes were chosen randomly. Only one class was chosen from each school. The randomly selection was done by drawing.